

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH FRIENDLY FELLOWSHIP
FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP: THE PASTOR AS
PACESETTER IN CREATING AN
ATTRACTIVE CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

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The objective of this project is to determine what kinds of people are best suited for effective discipleship ministry. The context of ministry for this project is Manasseh Baptist Church in Greensboro, NC. This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to produce the sequential mixed methodology research method to achieve the project goals. The model created allowed individuals to attempt to make connections with un-churched people over a twelve week span. The project found some people can overcome their hesitations in discipleship and fellowship ministries and effectively make disciples. The project exceeded the original expectations initially drawn.

INTRODUCTION

W. Curry Mavis, the author of, *Advancing the Smaller Church* wrote, “Like persons, local churches are sometimes introverted. Following the introverted pattern in human personality, these churches turn their interests and energies inwardly upon themselves. Sometimes they devote their attention to spiritual introspection which results in a neglect of spiritual expression in their communities.”¹ Mavis pointed out this reality to remind the church that an introverted church is not what Jesus Christ desired for the church universal. “We are on this earth to continue the mission that Jesus left: Go and make disciples of all nations”²

The task that Jesus left behind is a daunting work when one considers that they are in constant need of spiritual growth. But, “People cannot make disciples by themselves, and they are not expected to. God tells us to work together with the Christians He has placed in their lives to bring His healing and transformation to the world.”³ The goal of the church as a whole is to unify around the divine purpose of making disciples and then invite them in to the process of discipleship. “Discipleship

¹ W. Curry Mavis, *Advancing the Smaller Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1957), 30.

² Francis Chan, *Multiply* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012), 65.

³ Ibid., 65.

describes the overall life action of following Jesus. But making disciples is a command to attract people to begin the overall life action of following Jesus.”⁴

However, there are many people in the church who have not been taught the importance of discipleship ministry. In the following project the researcher will deal with the aspects of how discipleship ministry is ineffective without fellowship within the local church that can induce trust building relationships. Since Francis Chan has alerted us to the fact that we cannot make disciples alone, it is imperative that the church engage in building relationships through fellowship so that she can have effective discipleship ministry.

Another facet of the ensuing project is an examination of pastoral leadership. The researcher took the time to observe if the pastoral leader would be the pacesetter for fellowship and discipleship could the context of ministry set an environment that would make more disciples and help develop more disciples as well.

The Problem

After extensive research on the context of ministry, the researcher noticed that the ministry was very interested in doing outreach ministry. The context of ministry was always giving to the community and inviting the community to become a part of the life of the church. But the context of ministry has been experiencing low retention in keeping the people who have been invited to the ministry. At the same time there had been a lack of fellowship opportunities that could build stronger relationships for people to feel a connection to the ministry. Without a model that serves to build connectivity among its

⁴ Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 11.

people, it is no wonder why many churches fail to sustain growth and obtain success in moving people from new convert to discipleship.

Since December 5, 2004, the researcher has served as the pastor of the context of ministry. During that time the researcher has experienced growth that has not been sustained. According to church records, less than five percent of the people who have joined the church have remained active members of the context of ministry. Having consulted with one professional associate who is a psychologist by trade, the researcher was instructed to perform some type of personality profile on individuals to get a suggested idea of the overall personality of the church. From that point the researcher was able to collect and analyze data to help understand how the research problem could be addressed. This document will contain a biblical, historical, and theological foundation to express the validity of a discipleship model that has friendly fellowship as an intricate part its process. The researcher believes that this model can be of assistance to church that have issues with retention that negatively effects discipleship ministry.

This document includes six chapters. Chapter One introduces the researcher and his background. Furthermore, the first chapter describes the context of ministry setting at Manasseh Baptist Church located in Greensboro, NC. It also describes the connection that the researcher and the church share and places that the two can build on their commonalities to create a discipleship model that can be productive and effective.

Chapter Two provides a literary overview of writings that were useful in putting the project together. This chapter will not on have theological literature but it will also have works from psychiatrists that lend credibility to need of people playing together in order to make the environment easier to work together within toward a common goal.

Chapter Three provides biblical, historical, and theological foundations that validate the proposed model of ministry. This chapter will contain the most scholarly works that aided in biblical exegesis, successes in similar models throughout church history, and how God desires the church look through a brief study of ecclesiology; the theological study of the church.

Chapter Four describes the methodology used in order to add strength to the research that was being done. In this chapter, the research explains the why the particular method of research was used and how it works.

Chapter Five gives the collection of data, the analysis of the data that was collected, and the outcome of the project. It is here where the researcher gathered all of the information provided by the project to ascertain if the hypothesis could become a valid claim or not.

Chapter Six is the reflections of the researcher reflections, summary, and conclusion. In this chapter the researcher talks about how he was changed by the project, what could have been done differently in the project, and the desire to further give attention to the ministry model that was started by the Doctor of Ministry project.

Summary

The researcher does not conclude that this is a definitive model for discipleship ministry. This project was merely at starting point for his particular context of ministry. However, it is the hope of the researcher that this model could potentially aid churches who have not taken the time to examine the personality of their church to see how they

could best serve the “Great Commission” of Jesus Christ to go and make disciples of all nations within the specific persona that God has given to every individual.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

On July 3, 1976 Eric was introduced through birth to a very strong female personality named Helen Deloris Baldwin; nicknamed Faye. Faye gave birth to Eric as a single mother due to the fact that his father was Sam Anderson. Sam was twenty-three at the time and already had a daughter three years prior to the birth of Eric by another woman. Sam was also a fair skinned tall and handsome man. However the relationship between Faye and Sam was not one to be described as committed

For the longest time Faye seemingly lived in depression over her plight in life of being a single mother because she swore to herself that she would never replicate what she saw growing up. Faye was born to a single mother in rural Johnston County, North Carolina and the ramifications of her life were always attributed to the fact that she did not agree with her upbringing. Her mother, Lucille Baldwin, was a single mother to four children by the names of Larry, James, Lizzie, and Helen. Helen was the older of the two girls and consequently found herself as the caregiver to her siblings while her mother worked to pay the bills. Faye had to keep the house clean, learn how to cook, and be the nurturer to her younger siblings.

These aforementioned responsibilities caused Faye to graduate two years behind her graduating class of nineteen hundred seventy and also caused her to be ineligible for

college. She did not appreciate this lifestyle and therefore made a promise to herself to never repeat this cycle. The main desire of Faye in life became leaving rural North Carolina, getting married and having a family by any means necessary. But when she had Eric she often times felt that she would never accomplish this goal and led to a very displeased life. She often physically disciplined Eric to what some may considered to have been overboard at times. Her anger became a driving factor of her life. Sometimes Eric felt that she would protrude those feelings on to Eric and he grew up feeling unsure about himself on many occasions.

But when Eric was seven years old Faye felt as though she received a small breakthrough when she applied for a job with a very strong company that was gaining a great reputation quickly by the name of IBM. She felt that it was her opportunity to make up for some time that she felt like she lost. This opportunity gave her the chance to accomplish one of her goals and she left rural Johnston County, North Carolina to live in the up and coming Research Triangle Park; Durham, North Carolina. At this moment Faye left Eric with his grandmother Lucille Baldwin and left for the *city* to establish herself and return for Eric at a later date. Eric was now left by his mother and made to learn how to live with separation at an early age.

Due to the fact that the mother of Eric left rural Johnston County, North Carolina for the Research Triangle Park he was primarily raised by his grandmother Ms. Lucille Baldwin. Lucille was a woman who loved God and was a very devout African-American Christian mother figure.

She came from what many would call the old school and reared Eric in a very traditional manner. Lucille spoiled Eric rotten because she thought he was such a pretty

little boy. She favored him so much that Eric was often disliked by his cousins who were close to him in age because while they had to do house work Eric only had to sit under his grandmother. Lucille would often protect Eric when she felt that Faye had physical discipline tactics that often went too far before she left for Durham, NC. She would even threaten to call the police on Faye sometimes. It seemed at this point in her life that she had accepted the fact that she had made many mistakes by having four children out of wedlock and had devoted her life to Christian service. She was a powerful little woman and she gained the respect of her community in various ways. Standing at an amazing five foot one inches tall and weighing in at approximately one hundred amazing pounds, Lucille had a knack for commanding the attention of an entire room when she walked inside.

Lucille was born to Mary Ethel and the Rev. John Wesley Baldwin. Our family was never given much information about her parents but we would often hear her talk about how her father was a pastor by day and a terror by night. She would never go into much detail besides the fact that he was abusive to her mother and his children, he was a closet alcoholic, and a womanizer. However, Lucille would often rave about how great of a preacher her father was and how people would travel from miles out to come and hear him speak. Although her father gave this image of a Christian undone she still came to grips with her mistakes of the past and devoted her life to a God that she believed was a forgiving God.

Observing how she raised Eric really intrigued him to learn more about this God at a very early age. Lucille often felt that she was disrespected by society, but she still taught Eric to be respectful. She made him say ma'am and sir when referring to his elders

and she also made him display the best of manners. Eric often jokes with his kids by telling them that he says please, thank you, and excuse me because he thinks that his grandmother Lucille might jump from behind a bush and pop him on the butt if he did not.

Eric also saw the power of God in the life of Lucille because he knew that she dropped out of high school in the ninth grade to go and work on the farm and she could not read. But Eric saw his grandmother teach herself how to read by struggling with the phonics of the King James Version of the Holy Bible every day until she taught herself how to read. Eric also saw how the favor of God works in the lives of the disinherited through his grandmother. Lucille did not possess a High School Diploma but she was granted full licensure to own and operate her own daycare center in the state of North Carolina. She followed her passions in life and God blessed her efforts. She was also a praying woman. She would faithfully bow down on her knees every night and would commence to talking to her God loudly as she would engage into deep conversation with him and tears would stream from her eyes as she passionately prayed to her God!

As Eric grew older he often thought that she had the call to preach the Gospel on her life, but because she was a woman born in the late twenties she would have been shunned for publicly announcing this because of the way that women were viewed in ministry during her era. But she served in so many other ways. She was a Sunday School facilitator, choir member, missionary, and eventually a church planter when her home African Methodist Episcopal Church was somehow dismantled. She took it upon herself some years later to establish another church for her beloved denomination back in Johnston County, North Carolina.

As a result of the love for God and the church Lucille had, Eric grew up very active in the church and particularly in the African Methodist Episcopal denomination. The early years of Eric in the church consisted of him singing in the youth choir, serving on the youth usher board, going to Sunday School, and even being an acolyte for a short period. Lucille Baldwin gave Eric a very strong Christian foundation at church and at home. While at the house Eric was responsible for reading a scripture every night and telling Lucille what he thought the scripture meant. Eric was taught how to pray at the house, he was taught how to honor God with money at the house, and he was taught why God should be worshipped at the house.

Lucille did not feel as though the school system was responsible for teaching children manners and she certainly did not feel that the church was responsible for teaching anybody their spirituality. She strongly advocated for parental figures to give their children these kinds of foundations. And Eric finds himself grateful for the way that Lucille Baldwin exposed him to God and he is very serious about relaying this same kind of home Christian teaching to his children.

Eric would have to admit that his grandmother was not perfect. She made her mistakes and there were times while raising Eric that he detected that she would at times intentionally embarrass him in front of certain figures to make herself look like a stronger parental figure than she was. This sometimes fed into the issue of how uncertain and unconfident Eric was in himself at this point in his life. But overall Eric is thankful for how his grandmother reared him and stepped in his life during the absence of his mother and his father.

So the life Eric was one that suffered much separation. He grew up struggling with starting, building, and maintaining relationships. This struggle was a result of Eric witnessing the life of a Christian mother and grandmother who was not married and therefore gave no examples of how Christian relationships looked. Faye left Eric to start a career and family without Eric. His father was not active in his life. So, even with the love of a loving grandmother, Eric lived the life of a kid who sometimes felt abused and was very lonely with separation issues. So he always wrestled with watching close family members who professed Christianity and a relationship with God but would not have much of a relationship with Eric or anybody else.

However, the relationship Eric had with God gave him the strength to endure his relationship issues.

Just before Eric went to college, he accepted the call into the Gospel ministry, got married after his senior year, and twelve years later graduated from seminary. And even though Eric had issues with relationships, God somehow afforded Eric to enter a relationship with a local church.

On August two thousand four, Eric was preaching at the morning devotional session of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. After the Lord blessed the sermon Eric was approached by some representatives of the Manasseh Baptist Church in Greensboro, NC about the pastoral vacancy at their church. They seemingly were very impressed with Eric and the message that he preached on this particular day. Eric immediately sought his pastor Rev. Mendez for wise counsel. Eric did not want to leave Emmanuel or Rev. Mendez. He had grown to love this place and its pastor. Both of his

children were dedicated at this church and Eric began to feel as though he had everything that he ever wanted.

Eric had a peaceful home, a loving family, and a church family that he felt so much love from that he felt protected from all harm. Eric and his family knew they were prayed for on a regular basis and they were riding high without a worry in the world. And besides, Rev. Mendez did not want to lose Eric because with Eric the church was growing and ministry was at a whole new level. But much to the surprise of Eric, Rev. Mendez said, Young preacher I feel like you should go for this opportunity to pastor on your own. He went on to say that he felt that Eric had outgrown his staff position and that Emmanuel would be alright because of the foundation that Eric had laid.

Context of Ministry

Eric realizes that God led him to Manasseh Baptist Church because the pastor and people had much in common. Manasseh also had severed relationship issues because they were a young church plant based on the church-split model. Eleven years into the ministry plant their founding pastor left to pastor another church in Atlanta, GA.

Manasseh Baptist Church is located in the southern city of Greensboro in the state of North Carolina. Greensboro, NC is pinpointed in the heart of Guilford County. Greensboro was established in 1808 as the county seat of Guilford County on a site selected not for natural advantages but for its location at the exact geographic center.⁵ Greensboro, NC is located seventy-five miles west of Raleigh, NC which is the state

⁵ City of Greensboro, "History of Greensboro," <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=142> (accessed January 31, 2012)

capital and second largest city by population in North Carolina. And the city is also placed eighty miles northeast of Charlotte, NC the largest city in the state.

Greensboro, NC sits exactly at the intersection of Interstate Forty and Interstate Eighty-Five and is said to be the exact midpoint between Washington, District of Columbia and Atlanta, Georgia.

Greensboro ranks in population as the third largest city in the state of North Carolina, the largest city in Guilford County, and the largest city in the Piedmont Triad metropolitan area. The two thousand ten census report says that Greensboro, NC has a total population of two hundred sixty-nine thousand six hundred sixty-six people.⁶ Although it is predominately Caucasian, the city is fairly balanced in regards to its racial percentages between the Caucasians and African-Americans. The aforementioned statement can be solidified by the statistical fact that the African-American make-up of the city is at an astounding 40.6% and 48.4% Caucasian.⁷ The remaining racial make-up is documented as 4.0 % Asian, 3.8% were documented as other, 2.6% considered themselves as two or more races, 0.5% American Indian, and 0.1% of the reported population of Greensboro, NC were Pacific Islanders.⁸

Greensboro, NC is a haven for students because it houses six nationally accredited colleges/universities by the names of Bennett College and all female Historically Black College, North Carolina Agriculture and Technical State University another Historically Black College, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro College,

⁶ City of Greensboro, "City of Greensboro Profile Census 2010," <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=6532> (accessed January 31, 2012)

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Guilford College, and Elon University Law School. The city also has a Community College named Guilford Technical Community College.

With such a dominant student environment Greensboro, NC has been dubbed a college town on one side but being that it has such a rich educational culture it has been considered one of the more progressive cities in the state of North Carolina.

Manasseh Baptist Church is located at Eight Hundred Four Franklin Boulevard, in Greensboro, North Carolina. Franklin Boulevard is situated in the Northeast realm of the city. Northeast Greensboro is known as an impoverished and low income area of the city. In a one mile radius of the Church are three schools, Faulkner Elementary, Hairston Middle, and Dudley High. All three schools are predominately African-American as Northeast Greensboro is mostly black populated. And all three schools are labeled "Title One Schools." A title one School is defined as a school with a high percentage of students from low income families. In the state of North Carolina the Title One distinction is given to a school that has at least seventy-five percent of its students receiving free or reduced lunch benefits. However most of the members of Manasseh Baptist Church do not live in Northeast Greensboro, making Manasseh Baptist Church a commuter church with most of its members coming to the church from a different part of the city.

Manasseh Baptist Church was an idea that became a reality January twenty-third, nineteen hundred ninety-four when Dr. Matthew V. Johnson felt commissioned to oversee the planting of a new church in the city. He decided to name this church Manasseh Baptist Church because the name Manasseh means to forget. Therefore he

established a very non-traditional black Baptist church in order to heal the pains that he and his followers had experienced in the traditional Baptist church.

He had a burden to help people forget the bad past of church pains and head toward a better future in the church. As a result he and approximately three hundred people constituted the original membership of the church. These members began worshiping in one of the community recreation centers until they began to outgrow this temporary place of worship. At this point Dr. Johnson challenged every man in the church to sow two thousand dollars and every woman to sow one thousand dollars so that they could purchase a building. Miraculously the people of Manasseh raised over seventy thousand dollars for this venture and they marched into this build on May fifteenth, nineteen hundred ninety-four and this has been the location of the church since that point in its history. As the years progressed the church began to face some financial challenges and membership retention issues. But, Dr. Johnson was a scholar and an awesome preacher, and for that reason the church was still able to thrive until his departure in November of 2004.

On January 15, 2005 Reverend Eric E. Baldwin, the writer, became the second pastor of this church. When Eric assumed responsibility of the pulpit the church was at a low point in its short life. The telephone had been disconnected, the water had been shut off, and there was no transportation, no computers, copier/printers, sound system, and no incorporation on Manasseh Baptist Church. The membership had fallen off drastically upon new pastoral arrival and the active membership had dwindled to approximately thirty people. Eric Baldwin has been able to remedy all of the aforementioned issues and the church was finally incorporated on March 14, 2005.

Afterward Eric took on the project of gaining the church its 501(C) 3 status and the church was granted this on April 15, 2007. And as of Sunday February 12, 2012 the Shelby Church Management System documents the active membership (based upon members who have given financially in the last ninety days) to be two hundred thirty-four members strong.

The church demographics (see Appendix D) for Manasseh Baptist Church show the difference between the members and the low income neighborhood that the church resides. The writer was able to take a sample of thirty-seven people, twenty-five females and twelve males, of the total membership in order to have a solid representation of the church. So the first obvious demographic of Manasseh is that it is predominately female, 67.6%. The sample showed that a shocking sixty two percent (twenty-three people) of the church members age twenty-five and above possessed at least a Bachelor degree from an accredited college or university. Although shocking this statistic is very much in line with the city versus the state of North Carolina.

“In Greensboro, NC 35.4% of its citizens are college educated compared to 26.1% in the entire state of North Carolina.”⁹ Greensboro, NC is a very educated city because as stated before it is a college town and most of the economy is in education and Manasseh Baptist church is also a replica of the economy of the Greensboro. The sample that was taken shows that 40.5 % (fifteen people) of its congregation are educators in the city.

The bulk of the congregation is in the young adult population. The sample taken showed that 43.2% (16 people) of the church are between the ages of nineteen to forty-

⁹ City of Greensboro, “City of Greensboro Profile Census 2010,” <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=6532> (accessed February 16, 2012)

four. The pastor is in this age group so that could be part of the reason that this population is drawn to Manasseh Baptist Church. Only six people under the age of eighteen participated in this sampling of the church.

The economic conditions of Greensboro as a city also spill over into the church. In the sample of thirty-seven people it was found that 40.5% (15 people) of them made under \$25,000 per year while 5.4% (two people) of them made over \$100,000 per year leaving the other twenty people making between \$25,000 and \$99,000 per year. But the writer feels optimistic about the economic future of Manasseh Baptist Church due to the fact that most of the members are fairly well educated.

The numbers show that Manasseh is a contemporary church that is fortunate enough to have a strong showing of young adult members.

The up side to having a young church is that it makes for a highly dynamic worship experience. You will hear the latest in gospel music at Manasseh Baptist Church. The praise is energetic on most Sundays and because it is a church that is full of educators the Christian education department stays very busy. Bible study is well attended and Vacation Bible School is a huge event for the church every year. But the downside to having a contemporary church is that it struggles with good tradition. The members are not very familiar with hymns, cantatas, and anthems of the church. And many traditional Christians may get turned off when they walk into Manasseh because of its come as you are dress environment.

The contextual analysis that the writer prepared has opened up an opportunity to investigate Manasseh Baptist Church for the betterment of the establishment. Manasseh is a strong church statistically and is poised for a bright future. There are opportunities to

find ways for the congregation that commutes into the low income neighborhood to help elevate the people and circumstances that it is around. There are also ways to show how its non-traditional approach to worship can add to the worship experience of the African-American Baptist Church but we cannot negate that Manasseh should also seek opportunities to embrace some of the traditional values of the church and begin to incorporate hymns and traditional prayer meetings with testimony time in its worship experience.

Synergy

Eric Baldwin and Manasseh Baptist Church are two of one kind and God has brought the two together for a greater purpose than can be logically realized.

Eric has now found himself grateful for his phase one assignment of the Spiritual autobiography which gave him an avenue to look at himself and recall many issues that he was still reacting to unconsciously especially in his leadership style (The leadership style of the researcher will be reviewed later in this paper). After reflecting on his autobiography Eric then performed a brief analysis on his context of ministry and noticed how he was looking at the speck in the eye of the church he was given stewardship over and dismissing the log that was hanging out of his own eye. And once he began to start working on the issues that he had suppressed for so long the very things that made him frustrated in his context of ministry (Manasseh Baptist Church) were some of the very same traits that he possessed.

Eric is now clear that God divinely engineered his life to cross paths with this church so that they would be able to interact together to produce a combined effect for

the kingdom that would be greater than what the person and church could have done separately. Throughout the duration of this paper the writer will attempt to explain how the traits that he presumed to be unimportant for ministry purposes that are possessed by both parties can come together and produce something impactful for the development of Eric, and the church for the furthering of the Kingdom of God.

The writer will attempt to do this by first acknowledging the like traits that he and the church possess, deal with his own leadership style, and then talk about the possibilities for taking one set of traits that the person and church possess and begin a process of dealing with it for project purposes.

God truly have purposed Eric and the church that he pastors to be together for such a time as they share together. One similarity that will jump out at anyone who spends time with Eric the pastor and the pew would be the love that both parties share for education. Although Manasseh Baptist Church is placed in a low income neighborhood, the members are well educated African-Americans. The church has an overwhelming percentage of college educated people and a shocking five people of the two thirty-four membership are Ph.D. holders.

As a result of this shared love for education the church has successfully fostered and after school tutorial program that partners with the local school system to aid children between the third and eighth grades who have a past with struggling with their end of grade standardized testing.

The program has been successful in helping these children pass these tests. The program is funded by a local grant from the Kate B. Reynolds foundation and it also provides and afternoon snack and transportation for its participants every Tuesday and

Thursday from September to May. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings the church sponsors a G.E.D. program through Guilford Technical Community College for adults within the immediate community who are twenty-five and above without a high school diploma. Two members of Manasseh Baptist Church have benefitted from this effort. One of them actually came to the church unable to read and now leads the personal development Sunday School class and is also gainfully employed.

The city of Greensboro, North Carolina is a city filled with colleges and universities. For this reason Manasseh Baptist Church reflects this spirit of the city and the church is privileged to have a strong number of young adults. Eric Baldwin has been placed at this church as a young adult who is a pastor. Therefore Eric is not far removed from this college lifestyle and is currently living the young adult life that includes but is not limited to raising kids, attempting to obtain higher career goals, restructuring finances to prepare for retirement, and making preparation to be able to help his parents one day if the need should arise. Manasseh Baptist Church has done a good job in identifying avenues that could help enhance the local educational system but more could be done since the church is populated heavily with students and striving young adults. Eric would like to see more done in regards to ministries that would cater to the educational needs of the church and the city as he progress as pastor of this congregation.

The next shared trait Eric and Manasseh Baptist Church both have is a passion for community service. Due to the nature of Greensboro, NC and its reputation within the civil rights movement and even its constant struggles today Manasseh Baptist Church has a dynamic social action ministry. These members stay on the frontline of the community fighting worthy causes. They are constantly doing voter registration drives, at the city

council meetings, and seeing to it that the African-American population of the city is receiving its civil rights. Eric has been a member of very socially conscious churches. His pastor; Rev. John Mendez is nationally known for how he is in the midst of civil rights. Eric received his first experience in the social movement of the church while with Rev. Mendez as he led the charge to free a young black man accused of rape that was in prison by the name of Darryl Hunt. The Darryl Hunt Story has been made a documentary film on HBO. Ever since then Eric has had a thirst to see to it that justice is a preponderant portion of his ministry and the church that he serves as pastor.

Another commonality that the pastor and pew of Manasseh Baptist Church share is their love for the preaching ministry. Unlike a lot of predominately African-American Churches of the south Manasseh Baptist Church loves preaching. They are a rare group that can listen through a “whoop” and pulpit charisma. The other two men they knew as pastors were top-notched preachers! Many guest preachers who have preached at Manasseh Baptist Church rave at how attentive they are at the preaching moment and love the preaching experience at Manasseh Baptist Church. The preaching experience at the church is nothing short of divine. And their pastor shares that same love and thirst for preaching and he has also designed the worship service that preaching would be the highlight of the service. The design of the service is all devotional before the preaching moment. The service begins with praise and worship then it flows to the morning hymn. Afterward, the choir gives a morning selection with a fellowship time where the church members can acknowledge and greet the visitors.

When fellowship time has elapsed the sermon is set up with a pre-sermonic selection and then it is “preaching time.” After preaching the church then collects tithes

and offering and gives the church announcements. The church has developed a belief that nothing that seems business related should come before the preaching moment.

The leadership style of the writer is currently under reconstruction because of the Doctor of Ministry journey that he has just began. Due to his past of low self-confidence issues he has been a very hands-off and unintentional pastor. The fear of rejection has often caused him to walk away from issues that he possibly should have confronted head on. The negative of this leadership style, with both pastor and pew loving preaching so much, is that Eric has sometimes used the preaching podium as a moment to administrate and/or handle an issue. And on the pew side they have often leaned upon the cliché that it is easier to get forgiveness than permission and at various times have made decisions without consulting with the pastoral leader of the church. And the writer attributes that to a possible fear of rejection on the part of the congregation because they too have had to deal with rejection from figures of authority in their past.

It has also been difficult to train leaders because Eric sometimes struggle with the fact that he is appointed as a leader. The beginning of his current process of academic preparation has already taught him that he sometimes will be by himself and that being a leader does not mean that he will have the capabilities to make everyone happy. He is now coming to understand that leadership means making the hard decisions and living with the fact that many people may dislike him for a season. But Eric is moving toward a leadership style where he will be challenged to be a loving yet strong leader in times of making hard decisions that may or may not be immediately received.

Eric Baldwin has a business background and has been a manager in the banking industry. Eric can see that his business background helped him immensely with

revitalizing the church as an establishment but he did not do too much in rebuilding their faith in a minister or their faith in the church being that when Eric first arrived at Manasseh Baptist Church they were dealing with financial challenges and membership retention issues. Eric only took care of the physical issues of finances and facility problems. He did not deal with the membership retention issues which are the most important. When members leave a church the question must be asked, what is the leader doing to assist in people having some kind of faith in that local church, and what can he/she do to hold the interest of the people that he/she has the opportunity to serve as pastor? So the original crowd that Eric met when he arrived at Manasseh Baptist Church was never made to shift their focus off of all they been through that may have caused the financial issues and the problems with membership retention. This church plant started with three hundred members and was dwindled to thirty when Eric arrived. And the writer believes that this took their confidence to do true church ministry and in the end their desire to work in the service of God. Eric understands this because the intimidating parental figures that he has had stripped him of confidence and made him keep people closed out never allowed them to get too close.

In the same manner Manasseh Baptist Church displays similar characteristics and would rather work with each other intimately because they already know each other and are very comfortable with one another, as opposed to embracing newer people, training them in ministry, and allowing them to have a bigger role in church business and ministry. So basically Eric and Manasseh Baptist church struggle with the idea of building relationships with those that they are unfamiliar with. Eric would like for Manasseh Baptist Church to see the need for building relationships by pulling the crowd

into the core of the church. If Manasseh Baptist Church can see the need for embracing people and having valuable relationships in the church, Eric believes that the church could experience explosive growth and be able to perform valuable ministry within the city of Greensboro and in the state of North Carolina.

Eric does feel partly responsible for the culture with the church because he realizes his error of being a totally business minded pastor and negating his responsibility to also minister to the people. Eric walked into Manasseh Baptist Church and immediately embraced the officers who were in position and proceeded to stick his nose to the ground to fix all of the financial issues of the church. But now Eric desires to shift his focus in his doctoral project by building on the strengths of the church and the city that the church is in. Greensboro, NC is full of colleges, college educated people, nightlife, and grant money. Although the economy of Greensboro suffers tremendously the city is still very vibrant and it thrives off of its strengths.

Therefore, Eric desires to lead the church in embracing the spirit of the city that it rest within. If the church can catch the lively spirit of the city of Greensboro which is a very social life driven city and build on this foundation the church can thrive in a way that will be very beneficial to the community that it serves. Eric would like to see a church that will minister to the people socially, provides outlets that will promote fun fellowship, and as a result the people of the church will grow closer and begin to trust each other in a way that will allow them to be more productive in ministry together. Developing a culture that is consistent with the strength of the community is the vehicle that Eric would like to use to build trusts with the people of the church, see growth at Manasseh Baptist Church, keep retention high; while at the same time produce biblically

literate Christians who live out their biblically based beliefs. Eric hopes that this will help the church as a whole because new pastors will always assume the pastorates of churches and the need to build relationships in these moments will always make itself known. And hopefully Eric can use this kind of project to become a better preacher and pastor while at the same time helping other pastors become effective in his or her first pastorate where building the initial relationship of pastor and pew is needed. Eric is under the impression that building relationships within the church while simultaneously developing a fun filled euphoric atmosphere, consistent with the atmosphere of the city, will accomplish this goal of making the church as a whole see the need for embracing new people to work productively together in ministry.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

In recent years, there has been a focus on how to make a church attractive, but there has not been a concrete definition for the term “attractive church.” For this project the researcher will define an attractive church as a church on a mission to be attractive by drawing attention to the person and practice of Jesus Christ as opposed to drawing attention on the work local church. Therefore the focus of this project is not as much about church growth as it is about church development. The researcher desires to develop a church that is attractive to the masses like Jesus Christ was attractive to the masses. Jesus Christ was attractive to the masses by reaching outside of the religious sector. He was a proponent for the marginalized, left out, and the disinherited. Jesus was a friend to those who nobody in the religious community desired to help such as lepers and women caught in sin. The truth is that all of us are in need of spiritual development whether we are allowed to mingle with the mainstream of life or we are outcast like lepers and women of the ancient near east. Jim Griffith, who is considered an expert in church development in North America, says the church must possess, “attraction toward friends and relationships on the edge of conventional church circles and far beyond.”¹

¹ Paul Nixon, *I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2006), 13.

Jesus also designed a multiplication system that we refer to as discipleship so that he would not only attract the masses but help them to grow after they were attracted. Therefore discipleship in the local church is more than a ministry or a program. It is more of a lifelong process that never ends; moreover it is a biblical mandate that is rooted in the Great Commission which tells us:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).²

“It is as simple as going to people, encouraging them to follow Jesus (this is what baptism is all about), and then teaching them to obey Jesus’ commands (which we find in the Bible).”³ The aforementioned statement about the Great Commission is from the book entitled, *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples*. Multiply is a practical book written to help the church in the art of making disciples. Multiply comes with a corresponding workbook that is a step by step manual in preparing a disciple to make more disciples. Chan expresses that this book is based on the way that Jesus made disciples. He goes through the process by helping the reader to understand the importance of understanding the bible in the art of disciple making. Chan further suggests that making disciples require disciples to care enough about people to leave the comfort and convenience of the Christian community and tread unfamiliar territory to get people. The process continues to encouraging people to engage in the initiation process of baptism. Baptism is the same process that Jesus went through by the hands of John the Baptist. Afterward disciples are

² Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

³ Francis Chan, *Multiply* (Ontario, Canada: David C Cook Distribution, 2012), 31.

to continue this disciple making process by teaching the new disciple the commands of Jesus Christ.

The process of the Great Commission is easy to understand, however it is not a simple process to put into practice. Practically speaking, disciple making is rooted in building relationships. Francis Chan also instructs, “We never finish the discipleship process. It’s much like raising a child: though there comes a day when she is ready to be on her own, the relationship doesn’t end. The friendship continues and there will always be times when guidance and encouragement are still needed.”⁴ Therefore the looming question is how does a disciple of Jesus Christ build relationships that are engaging enough to go get people and attract them to become faithful followers of Jesus Christ?

The researcher has found it necessary within his context of ministry to fervently study the congregation of Manasseh Baptist Church. The researcher has recognized that the low retention and minimal growth of the membership stems from a lack of relationship building within the local body of the church. This chapter will introduce us to the literary works used by the researcher that were helpful resources in enhancing the study of developing an attractive church fit for making disciples by building relationships. The avenue the researcher has chosen to build these relationships is through fun and friendly fellowship. The literary works chosen will give a foundational aspect of how this method of disciple making has worked historically, supported biblically, and is central to the idea of Christian theology. These literary works will also investigate what other published authors have to say regarding building relationships in the local church.

⁴ Ibid., 33.

And this document will also give attention to how this disciple making process is akin to the cohort of Preaching and Leadership using some of the writings given by cohort mentors Terry Thomas, D.Min and Reginald Dawkins, D.Min. Some of the books used for this document were recommended by United Theological Seminary in the Doctor of Ministry Handbook.

Foundational Studies

The foundational aspect of this project can be found within various respected writings from many authors. One of the first works ever written to induce fellowship in the church for more effective discipleship was *Pia Desideria*, by Phillip Jacob Spener. Phillip Jacob Spener is considered to be the father of Pietism. Pietism was a movement that desired to move the Lutheran Church from corruption that was initiated by the Thirty Years War to re-focusing their energies toward living a more pious lifestyle that was more conducive to Christian living. The writing of Spener became a focal marquis of this new movement. The *Pia Desideria* is a rather short work that is divided into three parts that succinctly speaks on the issue of personal piety over corruption in the church and Christian life. The book is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the corruption in the church. The second part deals with the corruption in the clergy. The third part deals with the corruption within the laity. Ultimately the work leads the church to forming intimate gathering for more effective discipleship through fellowship. The part of the *Pia Desideria* that is being used as a focal point of this foundation is the third and final section called, *Proposals to Correct Conditions in the Church*. This is the part of the

book that Spener felt would further his desires to make the church a better place. Here he laid out six proposals for a better church.

1. Thought should be given to more extensive use of the Word of God.
2. Attention should be given to the establishment and diligent exercise of the universal priesthood of believers.
3. Christian faith must be put into action. For it is by no means enough to have knowledge of the Christian faith, for Christianity consists rather of practice.
4. We must beware of how we conduct ourselves in religious controversies.
5. In the schools and universities attention must be given to the moral development and moral training of future pastors.
6. Ministerial students should be taught to preach sermons aimed at the heart and directed toward the life of their hearers.”⁵

It is in Part III of this book that we see that Spener developed a plan to make the church more appealing toward the purposes of making disciples and to urge the people of the church to be better representations of Jesus Christ.

Portions of the plan for a better church can also be used today. For the purposes of this project we will look into his first and third proposals. The first proposal was, “a more extensive use of the Word of God among us.”⁶ It is here where Spener believed that intimacy and fellowship was the key to gaining a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures for individuals to live by. Spener thought it necessary to form house leaders who were charged to read from the Bible to their families every day. He also proposed that people read the Bible privately, but the focal point for Spener was the formation of *collegia pietatis* (gathering of the pious). These groups were led by not only clergy but also the laity who had what Spener called “a fair knowledge of God.”⁷ These groups were

⁵ Ibid., 87-118.

⁶ Ibid., 86.

⁷ Ibid., 89.

not meant to be separate from the church but where to act like small churches within the whole church.

It was in the groups that people were permitted to share their personal feelings and be held accountable to one another. Spener had a keen understanding that intimate contact with each other was able to make relationship and trust stronger between believers. In this book Spener is clear that it is the love that Christians build amongst one another that will ultimately accomplish all that the church desired to accomplish in his day. Spener said:

If we can therefore awaken a fervent love among Christians, first toward one another and then toward all men (for these two, brotherly affection and general love must supplement each other according to II Peter 1:7), and put this love into practice, practically all that we desire will be accomplished. For all of the commandments are summed up in love.⁸

Pietism had great influence far beyond its era due to the success that it had in Germany. The Pietism Movement has been credited with inspiring an Anglican priest by the name of John Wesley to begin a movement called Wesleyanism and/or Methodism. Many are taught that historically Philipp Jacob Spener personally impacted a young Count Zinzendorf who later started the great Moravian mission. And it was the Moravian crusades that won John and Charles Wesley over to Jesus Christ. Methodism, with the stress on Scripture, obligation to evangelism and edification, practical social compassion, and evangelical ecumenicity, was pietistic to its purest form. The researcher used a book recommended by United Theological Seminary entitled, *The Story of Christianity*, by Justo L. Gonzalez in order to bridge the gap between Pietism and Methodism. Gonzalez quotes John Wesley after he was brought back to the Anglican church as a priest after a

⁸ Ibid., 93.

brief departure. Wesley saw some things that he did not find as appealing in the Church of England. Therefore he desired “to awaken and cultivate the faith of the masses in the Church of England, as Pietism was doing for German Lutheranism.”⁹

David Lowes Watson also gives us additional historical foundations in his book, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origins and Significance*, for a relationship building kind of discipleship. Lowes is an Oxford educated British who has taught at Duke University. His specialty is in Methodist history and evangelism. He has also pastored Methodist congregations in North Carolina. His book is a scholarly examination of how serious John Wesley took discipleship. Lowes critically examines the motives of John Wesley as he points out that Wesley never intended for Methodism to become a denomination. Moreover the Methodist movement was designed to ensure that Christians in the Anglican Church would always feel included in the activity of the church and never experience discrimination in terms of their class or sex. Therefore Lowes focuses on the development of the early class meetings developed by John Wesley to press his claim that Methodism was more about discipleship and intimate relationships, than it was about denominationalism. In the introduction of his book Lowes said:

Methodism was forged in the grist and grind of eighteenth-century England, and its folklore is rich in the experiences of ordinary people endeavoring to live as Christians in the world. They took their commitment with sufficient seriousness to want to sustain one another in their discipleship, and they found that the most effective way to do this was to meet together once a week in order to be accountable to one another.¹⁰

⁹ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 268.

¹⁰ David L Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1985), 2.

One of the main focuses of the classroom meeting was to have sub-groups called bands where people were encouraged to engage in what Wesley called, close conversation where the motive was directed toward soul-searching examination.

In these settings behavior, theology, and ideas often became secondary to heart felt expressions toward each other.

These bands that John Wesley created also believed in having fun and friendly fellowship together. The researcher believes that this is where John Wesley builds on the desire of Phillip Jacob Spener for a more intimate and close connected Christian fellowship. Lowes highlights that these bands had fun together. These bands would celebrate together at ticket only admissions called “Love Feast” or “The Agape Meal.” It was in these functions that Wesley introduced friendly fellowship to the gathering of saints together. They ate together and shared in community together in order to foster a connection that people were reluctant to leave. These gatherings were considered to be such an experience that Wesley “indicates that they had an immediacy, and an impact which could easily be misunderstood by those not aware of the nature of the gathering.”¹¹ The people of the movement enjoyed each other. They did not only pray together but they also played together.

Having fun together is not only beneficial for children but it is also beneficial for adults. Psychiatrist Dr. Stuart M. Brown wrote a book entitled, *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. The book was written to explain the benefits of adults playing together in a community. This book has been used by many corporations and is praised for its attention to adults becoming more productive as they

¹¹ Ibid., 119-120.

play together in a given community. He encourages the reader to use methods of playing in service to their respective art and/or discipline. The researcher finds it beneficial to introduce this concept from the discipline of psychiatry to show that the idea of playing together can be beneficial in the business world and the church.

Dr. Stuart M. Brown, M.D. has found through his studies in the field of psychiatry that playing is a biological necessity for humans. The researcher has taken notice of two concepts that Dr. Brown expounds upon.

1. Play juices our problem-solving abilities. Brown writes, 'There was a recent problem Cal Tech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory faced with its newest crop of young engineers. Many were talented and academically distinguished, yet had difficulty creating solutions that required them to take a theoretical insight and put it to practical use. When the managers looked at the backgrounds of JPL's 'old guard' of retiring engineers, they found that many of them had engaged in vigorous hands-on play as children—they were the children who took apart clocks and tried to put them back together again, built soapbox derby racing cars, fixed appliances, etc. The lab shifted its interviewing process to capture which engineering job candidates were oriented towards this sort of playful activity, and this improved their staff's ability to tackle and resolve tough engineering design challenges.'¹²
2. The opposite of play is not work, it is depression. Being unable or unwilling to play is a sign of something much more serious than just an attempt to be 'serious' or 'industrious.' Jokes, games, flirtation, and flights of fantasy breathe life into over-stressed and change-buffed lives. As James Michener wrote in his autobiography: 'he master in the art of living makes little distinction between his work and play, labor and leisure, mind and body, information and recreation, love and religion. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence at whatever he does, leaving others to decide whether he is working or playing. To him, he is doing both.'¹³

¹² Stuart Brown, *Play* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009), 9-10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 155.

John Wesley incorporated this mode of play into his love and religion. As a result of this kind of fellowship the people were developed, the movement became attracted, and naturally growth began to happen with abrupt abundance.

The researcher intends to utilize this concept of playing together to make the context of ministry more attractive and enjoyable. There are too many places of worship that is supposed to exhibit the joy of God that is never supposed to die, but these environments seem depressed and void of attractiveness. Environments that are void of joy are very difficult to foster relationships. D. James Kennedy writes, “It is loving and caring people, not materials and programs that make disciples.”¹⁴

The African-American culture was founded upon selfless, relationship building discipleship. John Wesley was one of the first abolitionists of his day. He often spoke out against slavery and want to spread holiness to all people of color. Even though John Wesley never had the opportunity to further his cause in this part of his ministry, Richard Allen was inspired by the efforts of John Wesley. Richard Allen is the founder of the first official African-American denomination the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In the book entitled, *Freedom's Prophet* Richard S. Newman writes a biography that chronicles the life of Richard Allen. The researcher used this book for historical purposes, especially the portion of the life of the bishop where he wrestled with African Colonization and how it would affect African-American relationships.

So the question is why would Richard Allen eventually opt to stay in America? The first reason was an undying desire to continue to preach a Gospel that would at some

¹⁴ D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 4th ed. (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1996), 105.

point prick the sinful heart of racism in America. The mark of true ministry for Jesus Christ is a desire to address the infection of sin. Racism is but one of the many by-products of sin. But Allen understood that if he was to advocate for separation he would not have the chance preach the Gospel to achieve a true heart conversion in American. The second reason was he had a heart for the poor young African-Americans that could not afford to participate in African colonization.

Here is where his desire for discipleship appears. He wanted the chance to protect the rights of young black Americans so that he could show them that God does care for them even though they were in tumultuous living situations.

History gives an example of how building relationships through friendly fellowship for to goal of effective discipleship works. Furthermore the church must have a centralized theology in order to remain healthy enough to preserve the distinct nature of Christianity. *Christian Apologetics*, by Cornelius Van Til is instrumental in defending the Christian faith through the understanding of theology. Van Til uses a basic explanation of Systematic Theology to help a budding defender of the faith understand the nature of God, man, salvation, the church, the end of times, and Jesus Christ. In his book he explains that, “Systematic Theology, sometimes called ‘Dogmatics’, divides what it has to give us into six divisions as follows: theology, anthropology, Christology, soteriology, eschatology, and ecclesiology.”¹⁵

Theologically speaking the people of the church must understand the role of the church in the world where it exists. There are books that helped the researcher in defining

¹⁵Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2003), 23.

the theological duty of the church in the community. The researcher deals with the tenets of Ecclesiology to satisfy the theological foundations of this project. Ecclesiology is the study or the doctrine of the church, which is the vehicle that Christ chose for the spreading of the Gospel.

Systematic Theology, by Louis Berkhof is a scholarly work on Systematic Theology and is a classic that is widely used as a textbook in seminaries around the world. Berkhof gives a detailed explanation of Systematic Theology from a reformed perspective. He uses various biblical text to tell the reader how to understand the nature of Christianity. Berkhof argues that the unfortunate trend in theological studies is the lack of attention given to Ecclesiology. Berkhof said:

It seems rather peculiar that practically all the outstanding Presbyterian dogmaticians of our country, such as the two Hodges, H.B. Smith, Shedd, and Dabney, have no separate locus on the church in their dogmatic works and in fact devote very little attention to it.¹⁶

However Berkhof takes the time to give attention to Ecclesiology and gives detailed explanation for the church. Berkhof believes:

The reformed conception is that Christ, by operation of the Holy Spirit, unites men with Himself, endows them with true faith, and thus constitutes the church as His body, the *communio fidelium* or *sanctorum*. It is not Christ that leads us to the church but it is the church that leads us to Christ. So, all of the emphasis falls, not on the invisible Church as the *communio fidelium*, but on the visible church as the *mater fidelium*.¹⁷

This theological premise that it is the responsibility of the church is to lead mankind to Christ. This is strong support for the ideology of the church being attractive. The church

¹⁶ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 553.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 553.

has a responsibility to have an image that will not turn people away in their quest to commune Christ.

A portion of this attractiveness that the church can exude is how she lives out what she believes. The church primarily believes in a Trinitarian God. This God is the representation of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. "Tertillian was the first to use the term "Trinity" and to formulate the doctrine, but his formulation was deficient, since it involved an unwarranted subordination of the Father to the son."¹⁸

There were others such as Origen that maintained there was a step down in rank from the Father to the Son to the Holy Spirit. Augustine was the first to give some equality to the three in the Godhead. All three persons of the Godhead are equal.

Cornelius Van Til writes:

God exists in himself as a triune self-consciously active being. The Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit are each a personality and all together constitute the exhaustively personal God. There is an eternal, internal self-conscious interaction between the three persons of the Godhead. They are co-substantial. Each is as much God as the other two. The Son and the Spirit do not derive their being from the Father. The diversity and the unity in the Godhead are therefore equally ultimate; they are exhaustively correlative to one another and not correlative to anything else.¹⁹

The Trinitarian God who is equal in all persons is the explanation for why God is a relational God and how God is love. C.S. Lewis says in his book *Mere Christianity*, that without a Trinity, God could not have been love. "The words 'God is love' have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was

¹⁸ Ibid., 82.

¹⁹ Van Til, 29.

not love.”²⁰ The doctrine of the trinity that the Christian church believes reveals a relational God who desires relationship to give love that in its purest form is God. So if God is such a relational being then it is without a doubt that as humans we are relational as well. This must be the case because man was created in the *imago Dei* (image of God). This means that man not only takes on the characteristic of thinking and intellect but man also takes on the relational nature of God.

The Church is also the example of Koinonia. The book, *Creative Churchmanship*, by Donald Bartlow is designed to revitalize the church. Bartlow believes in the value of person to person relationships in an effort to have a personal connection that would entice a person to feel a sense of ownership in the local church family. He deals with the theological concept of koinonia to give a premise for the need of building relationships in the church. He said, “*Koinonia* is an exciting Greek word that appears approximately twenty times in the New Testament.”²¹ *Koinonia* is a derivative of a Greek word that means to commune by intimate participation. *Koinonia* identifies the kind of fellowship that is supposed to be present in the community of the Christian Church. Relationships are expressed within a community. The *koinonia* is also the most prevalent way that the church acts out its belief in the Trinity.

The life of the church must have strong leadership also. The researcher is an advocate for the pastor being the pacesetter as the church refocuses on a centralized theology to ignite the church in being healthy and helpful. If the pastor is going to be an effective pastor he/she must have a foundational pastoral theology. Samuel DeWitt

²⁰ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1980), 174.

²¹ Donald W. Bartow, *Creative Churchmanship* (New York, NY: World Publishing, 1969), 140.

Proctor School of Theology professor James H. Harris wrote a work entitled, *Pastoral Theology: A Black Church Perspective*. Harris chooses to write this book through the hermeneutic of Black Liberation Theology to aid the pastor of a church in the predominate African-American context. He argues that Black Liberation Theology and any other good theology should be liberating and void of making God a deity that is one-sided in judgement. By merging together scholarship and practical ministry, Harris focuses on liberation and evangelism in the urban community through church administration, worship, preaching, education, and self-esteem.

He argues that pastoral theology is, “a praxis that deals with the development of people, policies, and programs in the church and community that convey the meaning of Christianity in practical life situations.”²² He goes on to expound upon this definition by saying, “The pastor must have a vision for ministry and a plan for accomplishing that vision through the people who constitute the church and community.”²³ The aforementioned definition certainly validates why the pastor should be the pacesetter for any spiritual shift that happens in the life of the church.

There are other theological sources that help to shape the frame of this project. *Introduction to Theology* by Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra is another book recommended by United Theological Seminary. This book is written from an Anglican perspective, but it is a great starter book to those entering theological studies. It seems to be an expanded version of the eighteen articles of faith. The authors explain all of the

²² James H. Harris, *Pastoral Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), ix.

²³ *Ibid.*, ix.

basic tenets of Christianity. The researcher uses the explanation of the church for theological purposes in the project.

James Poling and Donald Miller in their book *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry* come together to write an intriguing academic work on restoring the marriage of theology and practical ministry. The challenge that these authors project encourages pastors to make the formation of the community of faith the central focus of practical ministry. When these authors completely argue for community as the base of practical ministry they proceed to summarize their method and give examples of how this method has been successful in the life of actual congregations.

John Leith, in his book *Basic Christian Doctrine*, takes Christian theology and gives it a practical flair. He gives the theological belief system of a Christian and then explains how standing on this belief system is instrumental in aiding the church to perform ministry that can effectively heal the wounded soul. This book not only deals with doctrine, but it also talks about the human condition.

Christian Doctrine, by Shirley Guthrie, is a book that is written to explain the theological basis of Christianity. However, the work of Guthrie is grounded in Scripture. Guthrie also uses many of the Confessions and Creeds in his work in order to give the reader a profound ideology of the beliefs of the church fathers. His book is based on the reformed tradition therefore God's sovereignty is also a focal point of this work.

The researcher has also found that this project is supported biblically. There were several scholarly books used to ensure a thorough biblical exegesis for the biblical foundations portion of this project. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* by Michael Gorman is a how to manual to help students and ministers to write an exegetical paper. He explains

seven elements that are involved in writing a paper on a Biblical text. The seven elements are the survey which is the careful reading of the text. The contextual analysis is what is done in making sure one knows the proper context of a text. The form analysis is the knowledge of the literary form of the text. Afterward, he explains detailed analysis of the text, the synthesis of the text, the theological interpretation of the text, and finally the refinement of the text. The researcher followed these steps to complete the biblical foundations document.

Eduard Schweizer wrote a commentary entitled *The Good News According to Luke* analyzes the contribution of Luke to the New Testament with special attention given to the culture that Jesus lived. Schweizer makes sure that his reader understands what the people with Jesus would have heard when Jesus spoke. His work brings life to the story of the “Prodigal Son or the Lost Son.” For example, when Jesus tells the story he says that when the Father saw his son a long way off, he ran to him. Schweizer explains that the people of in the ancient near east would have thought this action by the father was “contrary to all custom; in the near East, a mature man loses all dignity when he runs.”²⁴

The Dark Interval by John Crossan is a book on narrative theology. In this work Crossan takes the time to explain how we are to read and study the parables of Jesus Christ. He reminds the reader to first eliminate contemporary ideology when approaching a biblical story in an effort to find the gem that is being presented. He also urges the reader to find the original intent of a parable of Jesus in order to teach and preach a parable in its purest form. He teaches that in the first century myths where stories and

²⁴ Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke*, trans. David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 249.

traditions told through oral tradition that was accepted as truth. But a parable was a story told that was designed to subvert or uproot a myth. Jesus told the parable of the Lost Son to subvert a myth about who God does or does not accept, and more importantly how God accepts us.

An Introduction to the New Testament is a book written by, D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo. They are world renowned scholars in the field of Biblical Studies. They orchestrate a book that is not a commentary but a detailed historical and cultural explanation of the events that were prevalent in the Ancient Near East during the times of the New Testament writings. Although this work is from the conservative point of view it does not lack in biblical scholarship.

A Theology of the New Testament by George Ladd is written from an evangelical perspective. It is very detailed in explaining the New Testament historically and in the proper context of the times, his work is also mindful of its evangelical duty to remind its reader of the salvific nature of the writings in the New Testament.

William Lasor, David Hubbard, and Frederic Bush are typically known as conservative scholars. But in this Survey of the Old Testament entitled, *Old Testament Survey* they critically examine the writings of the Old Testament. The book is filled with scholarship from a literary and archaeological standpoint. This book is instrumental in writing a biblical foundations paper that will have the balance of scholarship and practicality.

Another one of the more helpful books in foundations for biblical proof of this project is, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching Exodus* by Terrence Fretheim, who gives his readers a very detailed account of the book of Exodus.

He does an outstanding job of keeping the consistent theme that the Old Testament is a shadow of the deliverance that will come through the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Fretheim explains that Moses is ultimately saved to be the deliverer of the children Israel. In many instances it is believed that Moses represents a figure of a pre-Messianic Christ. Fretheim says:

The exodus is a constitutive event for Christians; without it they would not be who they are: a redeemed people of the God of Israel. The understanding of the Christian Gospel has been decisively shaped by the exodus salvific experience. Jesus, like Israel, is called out of Egypt and tempted in the wilderness. He not only celebrates the Passover but in a radical theological extension, is himself identified as the Passover lamb and the supernatural Rock who followed Israel in the wilderness. He assumes the role of the new Moses or is it the instructing God of Exodus 20?—as he teaches his disciples from the mountain.²⁵

Along with sources found to be beneficial for foundational research, the researcher also was privileged to find authors who were in agreement with the ideology of this project. For starters, *Crisis in the Village* by Robert M. Franklin is a thought provoking and challenging book by giving his own personal advice as he deals with the crises that is evident in the three main institutions of Families, Churches, and Colleges and their roles in helping African-American communities deal with the fight for freedom. His main idea is to petition the African-American community to rebuild the values and traditions that have produced many success stories in the past. Throughout the entirety of this book he advocates of building relationships, filling class gaps, and mending divisions within black families, churches, and colleges. Franklin says, “there is a menu of substansive theological goods such as forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation,

²⁵ Terrence E. Fretheim, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching Exodus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 2.

community, and the importance of children and community service that can assist.”²⁶

Although Franklin wrote this book to push a community or koinonia type of position in the larger scaled African-American culture, the principle is the same of the local church. The ills of our culture and church cannot be healed without a greater sense of community. Building relationships that are meaningful will inevitably become a relationship that is healthy and productive. *Crisis in the Village* is an asset to this project because it deals with issue going on in the framework of African-American churches within the culture and how community minded people can heal our crises.

The Disciple Making Church, by Bill Hull the author writes this book to encourage the church that it is the responsibility of every Christian to engage in the ministry of discipleship. He bases this theme from three basic principles. First he tells his readers that Christ instructed the church to take part in discipleship, secondly Christ modeled discipleship, and thirdly the New Testament disciples applied what Christ modeled. These three principles are further explain in five sections within the book. The sections are What does disciple making mean, The first church: Jerusalem, The mission church, The discipling, and The principles of a growing church. Hull has an ideology about discipleship is that it must convert from what he calls the christocentric model to the churchocentric model. The christocentric model relied on the leadership of Jesus alone, but the churchocentric model develops leadership in the church. Hull also believes that the pastor is the pacesetter for a church that will focus on disciple-making. He said,

²⁶ Robert M. Franklin. *Crisis in the Village* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 57.

“The pastor can make a bigger difference faster than any other person.”²⁷ He assists the researcher in making a connection with the cohort Preaching and Leadership. Hull not only makes the argument for a leader to develop leaders, but he also believes that preaching can move people to disciple-making. He said, “The pulpit bully, as some call it, is the means of calling people to action and presenting them with God’s agenda via the Word of God!”²⁸

In the belief of Hull preaching “means more than delivering sermons to a Sunday morning congregation. Though it includes such an event, the pastor’s main function is communicating God’s word to others. Everything else grows out of this commitment.”²⁹ For Bill Hull the words of God directs the entire discipling process. There are writers even within the context of African-American Christendom who agrees with his thrust for preaching to change the climate of the church to a disciple making church. Donald Hilliard author of, *Church Growth from an African-American Perspective* says, “A growing African-American church is a Bible-preaching and Bible-teaching church with a balanced message between priestly and prophetic ministry.”³⁰ He goes on to say, “The goal of preaching is twofold: to bring unbelievers into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and to develop believers into spiritually mature disciples of Christ.”³¹ Therefore preaching must be taken seriously in the discipling process. The pastor must

²⁷ Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 19.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

³⁰ Donald Hilliard, Jr., *Church Growth from an African American Perspective* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2006), 66.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

deliver authentic sermons that are intellectually and spiritually stimulating in order to move the people of the congregation into a more focused direction; in this case the direction of discipleship and relationship building.

The researcher also found that Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger wrote a book, *Simple Church* that speaks to effective and structured leadership in order to make disciples. Rainer and Geiger takes the initiative to perform case studies on churches in America and have charted a method of discipleship that is based upon four strategic ideas: Clarity, Movement, Alignment, and Focus.

The main idea of their model is to simplify the manner in which we train and make disciples so that the church is able to return to its central mission of Christian discipleship. The first step to this kind of leadership they call clarity. They define clarity as, “the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people.”³² These authors believe that in order for the process to have clarity you must define the process. Defining your process includes what you are trying to develop and how you are going to develop. Then, they say the next step is to illustrate your process. For example, one can create a chart to illustrate the flow of the process. Thirdly your process should be measured. Measurements are crucial to see how your church may or may not be progressing through the process. The fourth step in the clarity stage is to discuss with your leaders about the measurements. The last step in the clarity of the process is to constantly increase the understanding of what you are trying to do.

³² Thomas S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 111.

After the clarity stage the authors call for movement. Movement is defined as, “the sequential steps of the process that causes people to move to greater areas of commitment.”³³ Movement starts with strategic programming. These are not programs to simply occupy space on a calendar out of tradition. But these programs are designed with the intent of growing and developing people. These kinds of programs are critical to the definition of the process. They fit what you are trying to do and where you are trying to go. Next step in movement is the sequential planning stage. “For example, the order of Cross Church’s process is love God, love others, and serve the world. The sequence of their programming reflects this process.”³⁴

The third step in the movement process is Intentional Movement. Intentional movement can be done by creating deadlines and assigning projects to people. But the goal is to resist the comfort zone that many church fall into. The fourth step of movement is to have a clear next step. The tragedy of many church is that too many leaders leave a process up to chance. The authors strongly abhor this kind of leadership. The final step of movement is the new members class. The new members class is designed to teach the simple process so that people will know the movement of the church.

After movement there is the alignment stage. The alignment stage is suppose to maximize energy in the church. This stage points us back to unity and koinonia. Alignment helps us to understand that a team effort is the best way to accomplish the goals of the disciple making process.

³³ Ibid., 139.

³⁴ Ibid., 146.

The last stage in this leadership book is to focus. Focusing means cutting out anything that is not helpful to the process. Leaders must know how to keep everything streamlined to avoid getting thrown off track in the process. This book shows how leadership play a very important role in creating an attractive, relationship building, disciple making church.

The researcher has also learned through the self study portion of this project that developing community that resembles the biblical view of the Kingdom and must be taught in the church. The mission of the church is to ultimately become a place to develop people as opposed to programs. *The Community of the King*, by Howard Snyder gives a theological research on what the Kingdom of God looks like. The Kingdom of God, he argues, is the mandates of God and how God wants to reconcile all things back to God.

Snyder argues that the church belongs to God. It is an agent to fulfill the mandate of God. But he is clear that the unity of the church is a must if the church is going to fulfill its call. Although the researcher likes the idea of unity within the community, he disagrees with this particular idea of unity. Snyder is under the assumption that the community must be “like minded” in order to be unified. The researcher thinks that when the different point of views of people in a community can be respected this is the true sign of community. The researcher asserts that the common denominator for the church community is our belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the sufficient sacrifice who died but was resurrected by God the Father and is seated at his right hand. The beauty of a healthy church is the differences that all people possess so that a variety of ministries can be performed to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to the Earth.

In similar fashion, Reggie McNeal in, *Missional Renaissance* writes with the intention of shifting ecclesiastical focus from being a meeting place “club” for congregant to becoming a relevant missional community. Reggie McNeal desires to instruct the church on how to work together for the cause of spreading Jesus Christ throughout the world. The researcher really uses chapter five that talks about changing the church from program development to people development.

John Ortberg wrote a book entitled, *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them*, helps us with the issues of working together. This pastor creates a main theme in his writings that informs us that nobody is normal. He highlights the ways that people act in a fallen world is far from normal in retrospect to how God desires us to live. Ortberg points to biblical stories where Jesus refutes his foes and embraces unlovable and undesirable people. John Ortberg tells us that we should strive to communicate on the terms of Jesus to practice unconditional love, be authentic, and attempt to build trust among one another.

Gabe Lyons and David Kinnaman wrote a book entitled, *UnChristian*, that is helpful to see through their research how some of the secular world views the church. The results of their project specify that the age groups from the late teens to early thirtysomethings think that Christians are judgmental, antihomosexual, hypocritical, too political and sheltered. Therefore the authors take time to look within the church to see in what ways the church may have been unchristian and then looks into ways that the church can take a more biblical approach to Christianity. He points out things that should be avoided in order to have an attractive church.

Purpose Driven Church by Rick Warren is also very instrumental in helping the church pull the outside community inside the church. The purpose of this book is to aid in church growth that can be done in a healthy and efficient way. The concept is one that suggest healthy church growth is a result of nurturing the community to become a part of the health core of the church, as opposed to the norm of trying to convince the core of the church to move into the community. He encourages the reader to also live their faith with purpose in helping the church to grow.

Finally the book *Just Walk Across the Room* by Bill Hybel highlights the idiosyncrasy that can be found in many believers. He writes about the danger of always being surrounded by fellow believers. The book teaches that believers should enthusiastically create exposure time, and cultivate relationships that could possibly give one the opportunity to share their faith at a later time. The writer encourages his readers to live in 3D by Developing friendships, discovering stories, and discerning the next steps.

This project is helpful for the church, but it is also helpful for the pastor. The book *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*, by C. John Miller is an example of how helping a church come out of its introverted shell can also help a pastor/leader deal with his/her own shortcoming in leading a church. His book is based upon his own experiences as a pastor who realized through research that the church he lead and most contemporary evangelical and protestant churches have a tendency to grow in on themselves by relying on their own strength and resources as opposed to relying on the power of God. This book challenges the pastor to be the pacesetter in leading the church to look outward and fulfill its missionary purpose as mandated by Christian doctrine and the scriptures.

Miller agrees that a pastor must be willing to set the pace for change, growth, and discipleship before the church itself can begin to stop growing in on itself.

The cohort that the researcher participates in has been helpful in developing the project. The Preaching and Leadership Cohort is mentored by Dr. Terry Thomas, D.Min. and Dr. Reginald Dawkins, D.Min. These two mentors have given the researcher helpful writings to help further the idea of a pastor being a “pacesetter” or leading a church to becoming more attractive. Dr. Thomas has written a book entitled, *Becoming A Fruit Bearing Disciple*. In this book, Dr. Thomas captured the essence of what it means to be a disciple. He took the time to deal with this issue of following Jesus or, as he put it, being an apprentice to Jesus. He said, “First, a disciple of Jesus spends his or her entire life as an apprentice to Jesus.

Second, a disciple of Jesus does not learn in the classroom, instead the disciple learns at the work site of Jesus. Third, a disciple of Jesus acquires skills in faith.”³⁵ It is here where the idea of learning through deed and word is the mark of a true disciple and teaching through deed and word is the mark of a true “pacesetter” as determined by the pastor.

The researcher will not simply preach and teach through this project. He will also be active at church events that are catered toward fellowship and building relationships. Our other mentor, Dr. Reginald Dawkins, taught us the value of a leader being active in the life of church activities. He taught us a lesson entitled, *Practicing Greatness*. In this lesson he said, “The discipline of belonging characterizes great leaders’ ability to enjoy

³⁵ Terry Thomas, *Becoming a Fruit Bearing Disciple* (Raleigh, NC: Voice of Rehoboth Publishing), 61.

significant relationships that nurture their lives. They not only value and practice community but also make a conscious decision to belong to others.”

The researcher feels that the works that have been read for this project will challenge the status quo and make research a profitable effort. He also predicts that learning the personalities of people, the best asset of the church, will be helpful for the church as whole in attempts to develop local ministries. It is when leaders learn to work within the framework of those who they lead gifts, talents, and temperaments that the local church will be able to find success in people discipling people. This project will be beneficial for church leaders to examine self in order to have a relationship building, disciple making church

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter will set a foundation for the idea that discipleship is better accomplished when a leader takes the initiative to ignite fellowship opportunities that are geared toward creating personal relationships. The theoretical foundation include a Biblical foundation from the Old and New Testaments, a historical foundation that will highlight movements in church history that are similar to what the researcher is attempting to prove, and a theological foundation that will get to give theological credence to the overall project.

Biblical Foundations

The biblical foundation will seek to establish grounds for this project through the authority of scripture. Mainstream Christianity believes, in some way, form or fashion that the scriptures are divinely inspired writings by men written as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. Therefore the Bible is a needed source in developing a project designed to better ministry in Christian service. The sources that will be used for the biblical foundations portion of this research project will be from Exodus 18:10-25 and Luke 15:11-32.

In both of these biblical texts, we can see how fellowship opens the door of opportunity for the discipleship process. Throughout the development of this research project discipleship will be defined as a process by which a disciple is enabled to grow within a certain doctrinal belief system and/or faith; more specifically Christianity. Using this definition for discipleship then begs of us to define the term disciple. The researcher will define disciple as one who follows a personal example to learn primarily through deeds and then through words of a teacher. The researcher developed these definitions by discovering the Greek origination of the word disciple which is the term *mathētēs* meaning “to learn” and the suffix -ship means being in the state or position of. As a result of one going through the discipleship model, the hope would be that this would be duplicated to develop more disciples. For this reason those who are serious about discipleship understand why this process is incomplete if a disciple only learns what is taught to them by word. A true disciple also must follow and watch their teacher so that they can take what has been learned and can put it into practice. The disciple that can put what has been learned into practice is now able to duplicate the process and produce more disciples.

The Old Testament does not mention disciples or discipleship in term, however one can clearly find various moments where discipleship takes place before the New Testament movement of Jesus Christ calling disciples to follow him and learn of him. Although the term disciple is not found in the Old Testament there is a Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word *mathētēs*. 1 Chronicles 25:8 gives us the Hebrew word *talmid* that is translated to the English word pupil. *Talmid* means one who learns.

A primary Old Testament example of *talmid* can be found in the relationship between Elijah and his *talmid* Elisha. In the New Testament, readers will ascertain that the process of discipleship continues after the ascension of Jesus. In the instances of discipleship between the Old and New Testaments the process is initiated by one who serves as a “pacesetter” in developing a relationship through a specific fellowship opportunity that seems to meet the one who will eventually learn at the stage where they are. For the purposes of this research a pacesetter will be described as, “one who motivates others to do the ministry of outreach by setting an example of renewed leadership that breaks barriers wherein many times the pacesetter is called to break barriers in his/her personal life in order to be effective.”¹ For this reason the researcher utilizes the two aforementioned texts as examples where there is a pacesetter who initiates a fellowship opportunity to meet the potential disciple/learner where they are in their walk of life. After which, these texts exhibit how spending time to strengthen relationship gives an opportunity for the pacesetter to notice an opening for a teachable moment where the combination of their deeds and words strengthen the disciple/learner to become better individuals and servants of the most high God.

In Exodus 18:10-27 the definition of the researcher of discipleship is exhibited between Moses and his father-in-law Reuel also known as Jethro. Jethro can be seen as a pacesetter that comes to reunite with Moses while reuniting Moses with his wife and children simultaneously. Jethro is the initiator who steps outside of his own tradition as a

¹ C. John Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1986), 15.

Midianite to celebrate the God of the Hebrew children and the victory that God has given by offering sacrifice and engaging in a fellowship dinner after the sacrifice.

The celebration of sacrifice with fellowship enables Jethro to be received and when he is received an opportunity is open for Jethro to teach Moses a more efficient way to judge the Hebrew children. After the fellowship moment Jethro is able to assume the role of teacher and Moses becomes the *talmid* who receives what is being taught by the one who has been received into fellowship. Likewise the parable of the lost son found in Luke 15:11-32 exhibits the same kind of process where discipleship takes place through a pacesetter, the father, who steps outside of his comfort zone to receive his son who had been lost but now is found by running to his son to hug him and kiss him on the neck.

This action by the father was “contrary to all custom; in the near East, a mature man loses all dignity when he runs.”² The father does not receive the son by immediately putting him back to work, but he celebrates his return with a feast. The father is able to show his son through his actions what it means to be a loving and forgiving father. The father in the Parable of the Lost Son, disciples through action, while Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses disciples through words. Once again both are done through by fellowship providing an opportunity to disciple one who learns.

Old Testament

In Exodus 18:10-27:

Jethro said, ‘Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, because he

² Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke*, trans. David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 249.

delivered the people from the Egyptians, when they dealt arrogantly with them.’ And Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law in the presence of God. The next day Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening. When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, ‘that is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?’” Moses said to his father-in-law, ‘Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God.’ Moses’ father-in-law said to him, ‘What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace.’ So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. Moses chose able men from all Israel and appointed them as heads over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any minor case they decided themselves. Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went off to his own country (Exodus 18:10-27).

This portion of the work by the researcher will concentrate on a biblical examination of the book of Exodus, establishing the interpretation, relating text of comparable material, and recognizing the literary form in an effort to provide a strong biblical foundation for the idea of fellowship yielding effective discipleship ignited by a pacesetter who steps outside of their normality of life to serve and disciple through deed and words. The actions of Jethro and the father of the lost son are examples of pacesetters

stepping out of the norm of their lives in efforts to be of service to those who they can teach and lead by example in an intimate setting. Most importantly to note is these pacesetters intentionally meet the proposed or targeted learner where they are in their walk of life.

The book of Exodus is one of the first five books of the Holy Writ that we in Christendom call the Pentateuch, but the Jews call these books the Torah meaning “Law.” Exodus seeming has theological nuances of the New Testament and is considered a Pre-Christian and a Christian book because “in Exodus God speaks words of Judgment and Grace to a community of faith.”³ Exodus seems to mimic New Testament ideology of moving from slavery to sin to being slaves of God (Romans 6:20-22) because “Exodus moves from slavery to worship, from Israel’s bondage to Pharaoh to its bonding to Yahweh.”⁴ The literary form of Exodus is often considered to be historical narrative which is a story of a historical event. The people and the places are true, but it is written as a story due to the fact that the events are difficult to fit in the framework of known history however it is also difficult to discount because, “events of this sort are not likely to have left marks in the archaeological record or in contemporaneous monuments.”⁵ While at the same time, “biblical writers are not engaged in historiography, rather didactic use for theological purpose.”⁶ The intent of the historical narrative literary form

³ Terrence E. Fretheim. *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching Exodus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵ Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* (New York: William and Morrow, 1980), 128.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 129.

is to give the reader a theological message that can be useful for spiritual development and growth, based on factual people and places in history.

Therefore since the historical narrative is meant to give its reader a theological purpose or message within the story, one could surmise that the theological message of Exodus tells one how God is very active in sharing in the lives of divinely created people. Exodus portrays a very relational God who is with the Hebrew children through slavery, deliverance from oppression, the wilderness, and even when they are rebellious. God is actively a participant in their lives as God leads them to become active participants in the lives of each other. J. F. McLaughlin says:

The book has also a very high religious value. It seeks to show, in every part, the divine interest in human affairs, God's watchful care over the oppressed and enslaved people and his rebuke of their oppressor, his guiding and sustaining hand, his judgments tempered by mercy. It reveals a God mighty to bring salvation to his people, their true king and Lord, not enthroned on high above them but dwelling with them, sharing their life, fighting their battles, and through his chosen and inspired servant administering their laws.⁷

The message of Exodus is bold in how it gives its reader a God of love, and this God of love uses a chosen, human agent to administer the order, structure, and love that God desires.

The focal character of Exodus is Moses. "Moses is regarded as the founder of Israel's religion, promulgator of the law, organizer of the tribes in work and worship, and their charismatic leader."⁸ Moses was born during a tumultuous time in the history of Israel when the Pharaoh of Egypt has reduced the Hebrews to slaves because he feared

⁷ F.C. Eiselen, Edwin Lewis, and D.G. Downey, *The Abingdon Bible Commentary* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), 250.

⁸ William S Lasor, David A Hubbard, and Frederic W Bush, *Old Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 64.

security due to the fact that he believed that the Israelites were growing at an alarming rate. Therefore the mother Moses hid him in a basket and placed him on the Nile. And readers are officially introduced to Moses when the daughter of Pharaoh finds him on the Nile and gives him the name Moses, “because I drew him out of the water” (Exodus 2:10).

As Moses grows up in Egypt witnessing the oppression of the Hebrew people he gets agitated one day when he sees an Egyptian severely beating a Hebrew slave. Moses comes to the rescue of the slave and slays the Egyptian slaver causing Moses to flee to Midian. It is here that Moses gets married to the daughter of the Midian priest Jethro. One day while tending sheep Moses hears the voice of God coming from what appeared to be a burning bush telling him that he would be the agent to deliver Israel from Egyptian oppression. Moses is ultimately saved to be the deliverer of the people of Israel. In many instances it is believed that Moses represents a figure of a pre-Messianic Christ. Fretheim says:

The exodus is a constitutive event for Christians; without it they would not be who they are: a redeemed people of the God of Israel. The understanding of the Christian Gospel has been decisively shaped by the exodus salvific experience. Jesus, like Israel, is called out of Egypt and tempted in the wilderness. He not only celebrates the Passover but in a radical theological extension, is himself identified as the Passover lamb and the supernatural Rock who followed Israel in the wilderness. He assumes the role of the new Moses or is it the instructing God of Exodus 20?—as he teaches his disciples from the mountain.⁹

However, even though Moses is successful in leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, and through the wilderness; readers are made aware of one of his

⁹ Fretheim. *A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching Exodus*, 2.

weaknesses in terms of administration in Exodus 18. Moses is charged by God to administer the law to the people yet Moses is weak in this department.

How often do we encounter people who are called by God but they find themselves struggling to do what God has called them to do? This is a great moment to reach out to someone and make a disciple. If as people of God we simply reach out that would be called evangelism to induce someone to make a decision.

But discipleship does not simply reach out to make a decision but the one who reaches out takes time to develop the decision that has been made and therefore a disciple will be made. Will Metzger says, “Our goal should not simply be decisions, but disciples and a faithful witness that glorifies God.”¹⁰ Here we see Jethro reaches out to Moses and takes the time to disciple him on structure and Godly administration. And just like in the process of discipleship when Jethro teaches Moses; Moses then duplicates what he has been taught throughout the camp of the Israelites. Duplication is the key to discipleship because, “Christ expected the disciples to reproduce. He deployed them into the world to obey his command and make disciples.”¹¹

As mentioned before, the terms disciple and/or discipleship are not mentioned in the Old Testament however the process of reaching out to have a moment to teach a Godly principle that can be duplicated can be detected within the Old Testament. One such example is found in Exodus 18 when Jethro advises Moses how to become a better administrator for the people of God so that Moses would be better equipped to perform the task that God called him to do. And Bible readers can also see that Moses was an

¹⁰ Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 201.

¹¹ Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 29.

intricate person in reaching out to Jethro because Jethro comes to the mountain to worship the God that Moses acknowledges as his God.

Discipleship is not effective if people do not spend adequate time with one another. Dr. Terry Thomas, in his book, *Becoming a Fruit Bearing Disciple*, captures the importance and influence of spending time with you teacher. In chapter three, “Hanging with the Teacher,” he highlights a moment in his life when his ministry was positively influenced by his mentor that he spent time with named Dr. Gregory T. Headen. He recalls, “In observing his ministry, I adopted of his practices, as well as, some of his personality and behavioral traits.”¹² One can easily suggest that Jethro adopted the God of Moses. But now Jethro will soon return the favor and Moses will be blessed by spending time with Jethro to learn how to become a better administrator for God and the people. But prior to the teachable moment from Jethro to Moses the Bible is clear that a celebration and fellowship that takes place. The celebration and fellowship is important to note because Jethro does not attempt to teach and/or disciple without being fully accepted within the community of faith, which the writer will explain in more detail later.

Exodus 18 is noted as the first at-Sinai narrative. Although traditionally many have believed that the Sinai arrival begins at Exodus 19, Van Seters has proposed that Exodus 18 is “out of place” and that a more appropriate location is in Numbers 10:29-32, where an “in-law doublet occurs.”¹³ The chapter opens suggesting that there is a reunion between Moses and his immediate family of a wife, Zipporah, and two sons. We last see

¹² Terry Thomas, *Becoming a Fruit Bearing Disciple* (Raleigh: Voice of Rehoboth Publishing, 2005), 77.

¹³ John Van Seters, *The Life of Moses* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1994), 208.

his immediate family in Exodus 4 where Zipporah circumcised the son of Moses. It is at this point that Moses apparently sends his family back to Midian and he continues to Egypt. But it is at this moment that Jethro reaches out to Moses as his Father-in-law. Note that the use of father-in-law is repetitive within the eighteenth chapter of Exodus. This to the researcher is the first clue of the emphasis on relationship in regards to Jethro and Moses. It is the belief of the writer that in the Christian church cold-calling, and door knocking evangelism is very ineffective.

When evangelism is ineffective the church has no chance at discipleship. Jethro and Moses is already in relationship however when Jethro reaches out to Moses on this occasion he finds a way to build on the relationship that they already have. How does Jethro do build on the relationship? “He hears of all of the great things that God has done from the witness of Moses, visits the community of faith, rejoices, gives thanks, confesses, presents an offering, and worships with the elders (10-12).”¹⁴ Eugene Carpenter says the aforementioned statement in better detail:

After Jethro has gone through a basic religious change from hearing the sacred deliverance story (verses 7-8), responded favorably, confessed Yahweh above all gods, presented sacrifice and praise to him and worshiped him with a representative group of Israel in the vicinity of the Mountain of God, then he, as the father-in-law of Moses, has a privileged place in Israel’s history. He is now capable and qualified to offer the advice that he does in the second part.¹⁵

After they worshipped together the twelfth verse gives us a small but very important event, “and Aaron came with all of the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-

¹⁴ Fretheim, 196.

¹⁵ Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus 18 Its Structure, Style, Motifs and Function in the Book of Exodus* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 97-98.

law in the presence of God.”¹⁶ The readers are told of a fellowship dinner that happens between the elders of Israel and this new proselyte who now exalts Yahweh.

“The sacrifices are followed by a meal. Feasting with a deity on the divine mountain is a mythological motif that expresses communion and harmony.”¹⁷ This extended moment of friendly fellowship after worship opens doors of opportunity because now Jethro not only has a relationship with Moses, but he has a relationship with Aaron and the elders of Israel which is important in the duplication portion of discipleship which will be explored later.

The Bible does not explain why but we do know that Jethro decided to spend the night with Moses after the time of worship and fellowship. He was apparently so comfortable with Moses and those whom he has newly connected with he is able to rest in their camp. Jethro is a pacesetter who has stepped outside of his comfort zone of Midian, he has broken religious barriers, and now he is in communion and harmony with Israel. The researcher strongly trusts that someone has to be willing to step outside of their comfort zone and lean upon their faith in God to set the pace in the church for discipleship. There must be someone intentional enough to lead the charge for discipleship. The writer does not know if Jethro has intentions on taking the charge to teach Moses how to become an better administrator, however he is an example that one could use to become intentional on outreach that leads to fellowship that yields effective discipleship.

¹⁶ Exodus 18:12b, NRSV.

¹⁷ Fretheim, 197.

During the stay of Jethro, “he observed that Moses, in his capacity of deciding cases brought before him, is trying to do everything all by himself.”¹⁸ In a secular sense Moses should have watched Jethro in the past to see how good administration looks because Moses is a product of the administration of Jethro.

Jethro is a priest with the Midianites, but while Moses lived with Jethro he tended sheep for Jethro. It is safe to assume that Jethro gave the responsibility of tending sheep to Moses so that he would be freed to do the priestly duties of the Midianites.

Moses has been a part of the administrative genius of Jethro, but he still seems inept to administer the law as God has called him to do. The teaching of Moses started by deeds and not words by Jethro. But Moses needed the reinforcement of words to complete his discipling. Moses was good at being a deliverer, but “a people freed from oppressive structures will need to develop societal structures of their own.”¹⁹ Structure is vitally important when leading a congregation. And so, Jethro while staying in the camp, became alert to the needs of the community of faith. The community has only one person, in Moses, to bring their issues before to be judged and deliberated through the laws of God. Jethro teaches Moses how to delegate, but not only how to delegate he lovingly tells Moses that what he is doing is not good for him. Jethro teaches Moses a structure that would utilize Aaron and the elders that he has fellowshiped with the day before. As mentioned earlier, Eugene Carpenter said, due to the fellowship that Jethro had on the mountain with Moses, Aaron, and the elders, “He is now capable and qualified to offer

¹⁸ Ibid., 198.

¹⁹ Ibid., 198.

the advice that he does in the second part.”²⁰ In the belief of Carpenter the only reason Jethro can initiate a discipleship process that starts with Moses and duplicates throughout the community of faith as Moses pours into the elders what Jethro has poured in to him started with the fellowship that followed worship. And now when Moses teaches the elders what has been taught to him, the elders teach the community of faith as Moses sets up a structure with officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.

So Jethro pours administrative genius into Moses. Moses pours the structure and the law of God into the officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Here is where the duplication of discipleship can be seen as the structure give to Moses by Jethro is now put into practice. Jethro then stayed around to make sure that what he taught Moses would be effective.

We know this because the chapter ends saying, “And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but minor cases they decided themselves. Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went off to his own country (Exodus 18:26-27). After the structure was set-up Jethro went home. True discipleship ensures that the teacher remain around through completion. Jethro provides a biblical foundation for a pacesetter who leads the way in discipleship started by relationship building and friendly fellowship.

²⁰ Carpenter, 98.

New Testament

In Luke 15:11-32, the physician writes:

Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. 'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'

Another example of the use of fellowship that yields effective discipleship is found in The Parable of the Lost Son found in Luke 15:11-32. In this parable Jesus tells the story of a Father who had two sons. The father seems to be the centerpiece between two sons, one who wandered off into the world and the other who remained home. This is

a New Testament text and therefore represents a different social context than that of the story of Jethro and Moses. The New Testament is filled with discussions about discipleship and how Jesus calls disciples to make disciples. Although this parable, which is the last in a sequence of three in Luke 15, does not mention the term discipleship or disciple the immediate literary context suggest that Jesus is reiterating by example what he talked about in Luke 14 when he discusses the cost of discipleship. “The immediate literary context is that which directly precedes and follows the passage.”²¹

Michael J. Gorman suggests, “that many misinterpretations of the Bible are due to neglect of the literary context.”²² It is in the immediate context of Luke 14 that Jesus says that one must be willing to forsake everything to follow him. It is in chapter 14 where Jesus talks about humility and hospitality. He teaches how those who want to hold on to possessions and familial ties fail to sit at the table of fellowship.

However the cost of entering into discipleship requires one to be humble enough to come and sit at the table of the master. Chapter 14 ends by saying “Let anyone with ears listen” (Luke 14:35b). And now as the writer begins to explore The Parable of the Lost Son he highlights the connection between chapters 14 and 15 by pointing out how the Pharisees and scribes are upset that Jesus has table fellowship with “tax collectors” and “sinners” (verses 1-2).

This section will also concentrate on a biblical examination of the book of Luke, establish the interpretation, relate text of comparable material, and recognize the literary

²¹ Michael J Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 75.

²² *Ibid.*, 74.

form in an effort to provide a strong biblical foundation for the idea of fellowship yielding effective discipleship ignited by a pacesetter who steps outside of their normality of life to serve and disciple through deed and words. The younger son in the parable show one who is poor and destitute like those who were willing to come to the fellowship table like those in The Parable of the Great Dinner. The younger son is willing to leave the world he was lost in and all of his pride to return to the father in a humble spirit. The father disciples and/or teaches his son by deed the value of unconditional love, forgiveness, and celebration of one who was lost but is now found in the eyes of God.

As mentioned before, the father is the pacesetter who steps outside of the character of a traditional patriarch of his day by running to embrace his lost son because “contrary to all custom; in the near East, a mature man loses all dignity when he runs.”²³ The father proceeds to clothe his returned son, place a ring on his finger, shoes on his feet, and celebrate with the fatted calf at a table of fellowship. In the process of discipleship the father displays the characteristics that the church should possess when attempting to disciple the lost.

There must be unconditional love, recognition of the forgiveness of God, celebration, and fellowship in order to receive the lost. Just like the father in this parable, the church must be willing to accept those who come as they are and care for them through their process of discipleship. Then finally the parable tells of the elder brother who in anger is unable to celebrate the return of his lost brother. He like the Pharisees and scribes in verses 1-2 is upset that the father desires to celebrate the return of the lost son

²³ Schweizer, 249.

and has never had a table fellowship to celebrate him. The writer will talk in more detail about table fellowship later in this research.

The third Gospel written in the New Testament is authored by Luke the physician. This Gospel is widely accepted as the chronicle of the life of Jesus written to the Greeks. “Following the convention of Hellenistic literature, Luke opens his gospel with a prologue in which he acknowledges his predecessors, states his purpose, and recognizes his addressee—Theophilus.”²⁴

Luke does not write his account from the standpoint of one who witnessed Jesus. F.J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake says, “The prologue (Luke 1:1-4) to the Gospel makes clear that the author was not an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus.”²⁵ Luke is an educated man and a Gentile who is believed to be from Antioch. Therefore his Gospel has a preponderant focus on Jesus acceptance of outsiders. D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo write, “A theme in the Gospel of Luke is the concern of Jesus for the outcast of society.

Jesus is constantly seen interacting with those on the margins of Jewish society: the poor, “sinners,” and women.”²⁶ The Parable of the Lost Son fits into the theme that look is teaching in his writing about how Jesus is accepting of those who are considered lost by society. Churches do themselves a great disservice to The Great Commission of Jesus Christ when there is no real focus on the acceptance of the lost. Evangelism cast a net to receive a random collection as we play the role of “fishers of men.” Discipleship

²⁴ D.A. Carson, and Moo, Douglas J., *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 210.

²⁵ Ibid., 204.

²⁶ Ibid., 221.

completes the process by giving the church an opportunity to accept what is on those that we evangelize, clean them up, and teach them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The writer argues that a very essential part of discipleship is when we open the table of fellowship and celebrate those who simply come.

“Meals played a very important role in the life and teachings of our Lord. Jesus frequently appears at table and his table-fellowship became a central feature of his ministry, and the occasion and background of much of his teaching”²⁷ In The ancient near east who one ate with was considered a primary variable in how one was viewed in society.

Table fellowship was looked at as a religious practice. They only ate with those of like theological positions. Table fellowship in Jewish culture signified, what Joachim Jeremias calls, “fellowship before God.”²⁸ Many attempted to eat with people of great status in the community due to the seriousness of how first century Jews looked at table fellowship. However Jesus brought about a paradigm shift to how table fellowship was performed in his day.

Jesus opted to eat with those who were marginalized by the culture. “The life and ministry of Jesus was profoundly rooted in his experience of God as a merciful *Abba*, compassionate towards marginalized humankind, and a God of wounded people on this

²⁷ Ernest Lussier, *The Eucharist* (New York: Alba House, 1977), 38.

²⁸ Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 115.

mother earth.”²⁹ In other words Jesus chose to eat with the outcasts to show his solidarity with sinners for they were vital to his theological mission of healing and salvation.

The parable of The Lost Son exemplifies the table fellowship of Jesus more than it does that of traditional Jewish culture. The hearers of this parable would be familiar with the celebration, but they would not be in agreement with the purpose of the celebration out of fear of being seen as a sinner or unclean fellowshiping with one who has been lost in the world dining with the pigs, which were unclean in Jewish culture. But Jesus contradicts traditional table fellowship of the culture to share in the lives of the outcasts, but also for the outcast to share in his life and receive what he has to offer. The father in the parable wants the son to share in his life once again and receive full restoration. Likewise, the church must open the table of fellowship in the way the Jesus did, in order for true discipleship to take place. The fellowship must be intimate and celebrative. The church must have the kind of joy that the father has for his younger son to be an all-inclusive organism that participates in the healing, reviving ministry of Jesus Christ.

The Parable of the Lost Son presents to its readers a Jesus who does not appear to be satisfied with the established order of the day. The Jesus of the Gospels stands in direct opposition to the Pharisees who are presented as guardians of the established order as they interpreted and enforced the Mosaic Law. The Jews of the first century were taught by Pharisaical order to serve the law. However, Jesus brought about a paradigm shift that encouraged the belief that man was not made to serve the law but the law was

²⁹ D. Durken, *Seer's Corner: Lunching with the Lord in Luke*, *Bible Today* 35 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1977), 372-375.

made to serve man (Mark 2:27). They also believed that God was displeased to be in the presence of people whom they considered to be sinners. “The Pharisees taught there is joy before God when those who provoke Him perish from this world.”³⁰

The intention of this look into the parable of the Lost Son is to convey that Jesus wanted to teach the Pharisees and scribes that when a “sinner” recognizes the importance of the need for divine presence of God in their lives they are received by God with exuberant joy and we should celebrate the new self-awareness of the sinner with God as the father does in the parable. It is through celebration that the father is able to receive the son again. Notice that he does not immediately puts the son back to work, he fellowships with his son before he is placed back on the property to work for him.

The writer will attempt to provide evidence of this notion by explaining the culture of the day in which Jesus spoke, significance of the use of parables, progression of the fifteenth Chapter of Luke, the accomplishment of Jesus with the parable, and finally its application for current day Christendom.

While Jesus was telling the parable of the lost son the hearers of the first century would have heard this story quite differently from a listener from the twenty-first century. A son who wants to go out and experience the world for his self and escape from the covering of his father’s shadow might be applauded in this present age. What family would like for their daughter to marry a male who does not know how to function and survive apart from his father? Nevertheless, the cultural climate of the first century was quite different from today. In the first century the world was under the imperial

³⁰ J. Dwight Pentecost, and John Danilson, *The Word and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 124.

dominance of the Roman Empire and the Roman Empire was a patron-client society. The patron-client society was one where persons embraced a system in which citizens formed relationships with powerful and influential men who were considered fathers or patrons and the plebeians or the commoners were considered to be clients. The patrons would provide the clients with advice, money, business opportunities, and representation. “A patron’s social status was measured in part by the number and status of his clients.”³¹ In return the clients would offer the patrons their loyalty, and service.

The client would pledge his allegiance to the patron. The first century patron owned everything and totally controlled the client. The parable that Jesus told would have been hard to understand because the son or the client seems to steps to the father or the patron and tells him what to do.

Another part of the story that would have been difficult to hear is when the father gives his son material wealth and frees him and when his son/client comes back to be a hired hand the father takes the son back and restores him to full citizenship signified by the ring placed on his hand. In the laws of emancipation of the first century; a client is only freed when he buys his freedom or the patron dies and wills an inheritance to the client.

The law established in the Roman Empire in 4 A.D. called “*Lex Aelia Sentia*” states in part, “If a client is freed or manumitted they could only receive full citizenship to the community by marrying a free Roman citizen”³² The son in the parable does not

³¹ James Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 192.

³² Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedia Dictionary of Roman Law* (New York: The American Philosophical Society, 1953), 547.

get married but yet the father/patron in the parable is still ecstatic to restore his son/client to full citizenship. Jesus deliberately twists the particulars of this story to change the mental image that the Pharisees had created about God the patron and God's relationship with humanity the clients.

The literary form of Luke 15:11-32 is that of a parable. One of the methods that Jesus used to uproot the established order was by teaching his principles through the story telling method call parables. A parable is more than a story told to teach a certain truth; it disposes a proposed myth that has been told to establish a truth in the culture.

"A myth proposes, but a parable disposes."³³ Parables are designed to persuade the listener that the truth that has been accepted by the culture is wrong. The parable of the Lost Son adopts the same purpose as all other parables and redirects the hearers who sit before Jesus attention that an established truth of the culture was in need of positive subversion. Through the parable of the Lost Son; His attempt is to subvert the cultural truth that had been established about God in Judaism "because in one sense the God of Judaism was not the God of the Old Testament. The God of the prophets was constantly active in history both to judge and save his people; the God of Judaism had withdrawn from the evil world and was no longer redemptively working."³⁴

The Pharisees taught of a God who was aloof and separate from sinners and they also attributed many dreadful illnesses to the sin of a person or their parents. The Pharisees lived out these teachings and displayed their utter dismay for Jesus because of

³³ John D Crossan, *The Dark Interval* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 1988), 47.

³⁴ George E Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 80.

the way he received sinners that were drawn to him (Luke 15:1-2). Therefore the established truth of the day was “righteous” men were not to receive sinners lest they be considered contaminated and unclean. But, the parable of the Lost Son tells a story of a father whose son had sinned against him and dealt with the pigs that the Jews considered an unclean animal. Consequently the son is totally unclean and contaminated by first century Jewish standards, yet the father is happy to receive his son unto himself and celebrate his return.

The parable of the Lost Son is the last in the succession of three parables that set up the truth that Jesus is reestablishing about the joy God has over a sinner coming into divine presence after they become self-aware that they need the providential care of his divine presence as the heavenly patron and in return become willing to offer their eternal loyalty as an earthly client.

The fifteenth chapter of Luke starts by alerting biblical readers that the Pharisees and Sadducees were livid that Jesus would allow sinners into his presence. Following this short introduction we are brought into to parables in verses 3-10 that set up the main idea of the parable of the Lost Son. The main idea of the Lost Son is that sinners, who are represented by the son, must come to a self-awareness that they are hopeless outside of the divine presence of God and must be willing to surrender all (pride, worldly goods, etc.) because God anxiously awaits sinners and God is eager for them to come to the table of fellowship and be taught, restored, and celebrated.

The father in the parable shows the church of today that one cannot be place back on the field to work in order to be accepted fully in the church of Jesus Christ. The father is a direct contrast to the elder son who felt that his faithful service on the field warranted

celebration. The writer sees this as a common problem in the local church and for the sake of this project calls this the elder son syndrome. Many people of the church are faithful in the work of the church but lack the enthusiasm to retrieve the lost. They feel that celebration should be for the chores of the church rather than the purpose of leading lost souls to Christ, celebrating their decision to come to Christ, and caring for their souls that they will receive the love of Christ through people of the church. The hardest job of a Christian is to love those in an unlovable state. This is why one must be willing to step outside of their natural proclivity and celebrate those to return to the likeness of God.

Therefore, the celebration and table fellowship in the parable is a key component in to open the door for discipleship. As mentioned before the father teaches his son about unconditional love, forgiveness, and celebration of a returned soul by his deeds. When a person of the church takes on the responsibility of making disciples they must understand that the one following them watches their actions and deeds. Nearing the end of the parable the father also reaches out to the elder son who is angry at the celebration in process for his brother. The father attempts to teach the son through words but his teaching is not received.

One of the vehicles that many people will use in their quest to find God is the church. But have we given more time to developing and images for our churches and less time rejoicing when the drug addict walks through the door?

Have we been guilty of looking at one of a different race in our predominately African-American or Caucasian churches with an unwelcomed look? Do we fail to rejoice with Jesus when someone who was in sin asks for help to come out of sin? Jesus is teaching the importance of fellowship in the church that gives the opportunity for

revival and restoration. This parable is another example of how a pacesetter whom steps outside of their comfort zone is able to lead the charge of friendly fellowship that leads to effective discipleship.

Historical Foundation

In the Biblical Foundations of this research the writer has already explained the theme of fellowship yielding effective discipleship as it is led by a pacesetter. The writer has explicated from Exodus 18 how Jethro became the pacesetter by stepping outside of traditions, led worship for the true and living God, fellowshiped on the mountain with a celebrative feast, and finally found himself in a position to personally disciple Moses in the area of leadership. In Luke 15 the writer has explained the parable of The Lost Son in the way that the listeners of The ancient near east would have heard the parable. Again the writer has identified a pacesetter; the Father of the lost son, who also steps outside of himself by running to the son as opposed to the son running to him, thanked God for the return of the son, celebrated the son with a table feast, and finally found himself in a position to disciple the younger and elder son. Additionally, the Historical Foundations will focus upon the already established theme by attempting to take a brief journey through Church History. The essay will build a historical foundation through a discussion of The Pietism Movement which was initiated by Philipp Jacob Spener.

This portion of the essay will recall the purposes of why Spener thought it necessary to be a pacesetter to spur a paradigm shift in the way that church was done as a whole in efforts for there to be more effective spiritual transformation in the lives of those who were a part of the church. This essay will also discuss the challenges of the

Pietism Movement in order to flow to another historical church pacesetter by the name of John Wesley who was an adherent to the teachings of Philipp Jacob Spener yet was inspired to build upon the Pietist movement and attempt to correct what he felt was the downfall of Spener.

In this revelation, Wesley developed an idea that is called “social holiness” that speaks to the need of fellowship and carrying the Gospel into the world by eradicating the temptations of being sectarian in our faith. This section will also highlight the successes of the Methodists Movement, but the paper will reveal where Wesley personally felt that he had failed. Finally, we will look into the first African-American church movement, The African Methodist Episcopal Church, and investigate the struggle that its leader, Bishop Richard Allen had with African Colonization. The researcher will attempt to show how Allen saw the spiritual and secular advantages of colonization, but he also saw how this was a hindrance to the spreading of the Gospel and making disciples.

So the question is what is the common thread between these three pacesetters that would make for a historical discussion that could build a foundation for fellowships and relationships that produce effective discipleship? Each of these men saw the desire of men to gain and/or possess power by means of conquer and divide. As a result they saw how the church suffered in its ability to bring forth a clear Gospel message that would make making disciples for Christ more than challenging. The answer is a simple one but a complex one. It is simple because the old adage of conquer and divide has been successful at hindering, not only discipleship in the church, but anything that desires to make progress. But it is a complex answer because each of these men in their quest to

have success in the mission of the found themselves in the midst of sectarian behavior that caused the need for other church leaders after them to build on what they started.

Therefore the need for this historical paper will not only show that there is success in creating fellowships that build relationships where people are accountable to one another so that discipleship can go forth. But this paper will also point out the possibilities of how fellowships can also become another separatist movement if not properly monitored. The writer believes that this is necessary for a doctoral project so that the context of ministry that is being research will be able to recognize moments when relationships become exclusive as opposed to inclusive. The historical foundation built in this paper will be consistent with the themes of this project of having a pacesetter who leads followers in a direction that would encourage relationship building strategies that make discipleship more effective.

Pietism and Philipp Jacob Spener

Philipp Jacob Spener was destined to be a pacesetter with the ability to step outside of the normality of his surroundings and become a radical leader from the onset of his birth. He was born into a Lutheran family in Rappoltsweiler, Germany on January 13, 1635. The significance of the aforementioned statement points to Spener being born as a pacesetter due to the fact that Rappoltsweiler, Germany was predominantly Catholic in its religiosity under the leadership of the Bishop of Basel.

Because of this Lutherans of Rappoltsweiler were not able to worship in churches within their city, take sacraments, or attend Lutheran schools and were forced to practice their faith in surrounding cities.

Due to the stressful religious environment that Spener was born, he found himself seeking personal piety from an early age. He was influenced by people and books that were made accessible to him. His godmother at his baptism, The Countess Agatha von Rappoltstein, was one of his spiritual influences and was also his benefactor that enabled him to receive his college education. Although not much is known about his personal relationship with her, it is believed that her death had such an impact on his life that he hinted toward his pain in the autobiography of his life. Another person who was very influential in his life during his early years was his brother-in-law Joachim Stoll. Spener had such esteem for Stoll that he once said that he was “a well versed man, wonderfully endowed by God, equipped by long experience in matters advantageous to the common welfare, and one whom I have always respected as a father.”³⁵ “Stoll served as the first formative spiritual leader in the life of Spener because he was his catechism teacher and also introduced him to a writing collection by Johann Arndt entitled, *True Christianity*.”³⁶

True Christianity was written fifteen years before the birth of Philipp Jacob Spener. So, being that he was born to a Christian home he spent time in devotion and mainly read the Bible and the collection of Arndt as during his devotional time in order to develop his personal piety. This was a very timely writing for Spener because he was born during the height of “The Thirty Years War,” which was a fight that involved most of the countries of central Europe and lasted from 1618 to 1648.

³⁵ Philipp J. Spener, *Pia Desideria*. Trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 34.

³⁶ Ibid., 35.

There was no single cause for the war, but initially it was a religious war between Protestants and Catholics within the Roman Empire. As the war progressed it became apparent that the balance of power within the Roman Empire came to the forefront of this dispute. When the fight for the balance of power entered into the war many of the surrounding powers began to state their claim for power as well causing a brutal territorial struggle to ensue. As a result, piety became a very important issue in Germany during The Thirty Years War because it was said to have a horrific effect on the morality of the land. The aftermath on the morality of the land caused a historian of The Thirty Years War to say:

The country being at the mercy of the Europe's soldiery, the destruction was such that whole villages and towns simply disappeared. Houses and barns were burned, available food stocks were wasted or destroyed. For fear of being horribly mistreated the people fled, and the farms stood idle. Under the circumstances hordes of homeless refugees moved from place to place begging, robbing, and destroying anything that might stand in their way...all social order broke down and self-preservation became the only law which had meaning. Famine and disease swept across the country. . . . Perhaps even more important that the material loss was the effect of the war upon the moral fiber of the people. 'Old and young,' complained pastor Heinlin of Wuerttemberg, 'can no longer tell what is of God or of the devil, poor widows and orphans are counted for dung, like dogs they are pushed into the street, there to perish of cold and hunger.' The cruelty generated was notorious. . . . In some sections the rapacity of the nobility knew no bounds, so that the defenseless peasantry was depressed to the level of beasts of burden. . . . During the aftermath of the war the model for German court life became France. The sons of nobility no longer visited the universities. They now became soldiers and prided themselves with a ruthless, uninhibited kind of 'Herrenmoral' which further corrupted the nation. Emulating their superiors the peasants reveled in drunkenness and vice.³⁷

So another result of the damage the war accomplished in damaging the moral fiber of the home of Spener was the control that the state gained over the church.

³⁷ Ernest F. Stoeffler, F., *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 181-182.

Political “Christians” as opposed to “practicing believers” held all of the power in the church. Of course, this action led to the corruption and division in the German Lutheran Church.

It is by observation that the researcher has recognized that the precursor to division in the local church is power struggle. Power struggle typically leads to division because those who are leaders of the struggle tend to attract followers who find themselves at odds over issues that have little or nothing to do with making disciples or experiencing the Christian faith to have a changed heart that is concerned with righteousness. Spener found himself influenced to experience the Christian faith by the words of Johann Arndt who believed, “many think theology is a mere science, or rhetoric, whereas it is a living experience and practice. Everyone now endeavors to be eminent and distinguished in the world, but no one is willing to learn to be pious.”³⁸ Although Arndt was a respected Lutheran leader he found much opposition and was asked to leave two Lutheran churches because of his views on personal piety.

The Lutheran church was heavily concerned with the academic side of theology. It was believed that during the reformation Luther looked for assistance with the rulers of the land because they were the most educated. The problem that eventually came was these rulers began to use the church as a political platform and began to call pastors who would adhere to their political agendas. So as The Thirty Years War was ending and up rise in the church for intellectualism as opposed to spirituality began.

³⁸ Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 21.

It is understood that the church should have trained leaders, but there should always be a fine balance of mind and spirit so that the main focus of the church, being fellowship and discipleship, will never be made void. Richard D. Balge says, “There is always the danger that knowledge of right teaching will be confused with faith and that adherence to an orthodox system of doctrine will breed a self-righteous complacency that precludes personal conviction of sin and trust in the Savior of sinners.”³⁹

With intellectualism starting to have more predominance over piety a young well trained pastor, Philipp Jacob Spener, found himself continuing the work that was started by Johann Arndt to refocus church energy. He had been academically prepared but he was also devotionally charged. And with the writing of his classical work entitled, *Pia Desideria*, Spener became the leader of a new Pietist Movement.

Pia Desideria (Pious Wishes)

The *Pia Desideria* is a rather short work that is divided into three parts that succinctly speaks on the issue of personal piety over corruption in the church and Christian life. The book is divided into three parts. The first part is the *Conspectus of Corrupt Condition in the Church*. In this portion of the book he dealt with what he called the Three Estates of civil authorizes, clergy, and common people. Spener clearly pointed out what seemed to be authorities and/or politicians who had “been freed from the papal clericalism”⁴⁰ but were now drunk with their own power. He said that these positions

³⁹ Richard D. Balge, “Pietism’s Teaching on Church and Ministry,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (Fall 1985): 248.

⁴⁰ Spener, 43.

were by scripture given to them by God and they should act as such “but they live in debaucheries and sin.”⁴¹

The next point of focus was on the clergy that Spener called, “totally corrupt.”⁴² Spener believed the clergy was corrupt because they had gained a vast wealth of theological knowledge yet they were void of a spiritual relationship with God. Spener thought that they wanted to preach in prestigious pulpits more than they want to be used by God. The third estate of the common man Spener attacked the sins of the laity of drunkenness, greedy civil disputes in the court of law, and their belief that they were saved by simple church participation and attendance. Overall Spener wanted all to understand that no one can achieve true salvation by living any kind of way that they wanted by simply leaning on the knowledge that Christ was the sufficient sacrifice for all sin.

The part of the *Pia Desideria* that is being used as a focal point of this foundation is the third and final section called, *Proposals to Correct Conditions in the Church*. This is the part of the book that Spener felt would further his desires to make the church a better place. Here he laid out six proposals for a better church. “1) Thought should be given to more extensive use of the Word of God. 2) Attention should be given to the establishment and diligent exercise of the universal priesthood of believers. 3) Christian faith must be put into action. For it is by no means enough to have knowledge of the Christian faith, for Christianity consists rather of practice. 4) We must beware of how we

⁴¹ Ibid., 43.

⁴² Ibid., 44.

conduct ourselves in religious controversies. 5) In the schools and universities attention must be given to the moral development and moral training of future pastors.

6) Ministerial students should be taught to preach sermons aimed at the heart and directed toward the life of their hearers.”⁴³ It is in Part III of this book that we see that Spener developed a plan to make the church more appealing toward the purposes of making disciples and to urge the people of the church to be better representations of Jesus Christ.

In these six proposals we learn in church history that Spener actually had a lot of success inducing fellowship and making disciples. But what transpired from these proposals that caused Spener to have success inducing fellowship and making disciples? And what can we take from his plan to build a historical foundation for relationships in the church that will give greater success in making disciples? The researcher understands that Spener was dealing with the dissention within all German Lutherans which is a larger scale than a local congregation. However within the local church there are similar issues that Spener dealt with on a larger scale that also has an impact on the singular local church body. Well trained officers and officials can gain power within their church. The power they gain can be wrought from family ties and even stature in the community without any consideration for their soul salvation. They can also desire that a pastor conform to their specific interest that has more to do with church structure and administration, but have little to do with the two of the spiritual purposes of the church; fellowship and discipleship. “To be a successful (different from faithful) pastor in the

⁴³ Spener, 87-118.

world is to confront the ever present temptation to sell one's soul, compromising one's vocation and ethical responsibilities, in exchange for or access to wealth."⁴⁴ And the laity of the local congregation can find themselves in the mundane rigmarole of participation and attendance while disregarding their reasonable service to faithfully serve God in a way that would draw others to the church but more importantly Jesus Christ.

Portions of the plan of Spener for a better church can also be used today. For the purposes of this project we will look into his first and third proposals. The first proposal was, "*a more extensive use of the Word of God among us.*"⁴⁵ It is here where Spener believed that intimacy and fellowship was the key to gaining a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures for individuals to live by. He was convinced that simply hearing Sunday morning sermons was not enough to provide people with enough Godly knowledge to live as growing Christians. Spener wrote:

The more at home the Word of God is among us, the more we shall bring forth its fruits. . . . It may appear that the Word of God has sufficiently free course among us inasmuch as various places (as in this city) there is daily or frequent preaching from the pulpit. When we reflect further on the matter, however, we shall find that with respect to this first proposal more is needed. I do not at all disapprove of the preaching of sermons in which a Christian congregation is instructed by the reading and exposition of a certain text, for I myself do this. But I find that this is not enough.⁴⁶

Therefore, Spener thought it necessary to form house leaders who were charged to read from the Bible to their families every day. He also proposed that people read the Bible privately, but the focal point for Spener was the formation of *collegia pietatis*

⁴⁴ Robert M Franklin, *Crisis in the Village* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 112.

⁴⁵ Spener, 86.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 86.

(gathering of the pious). These groups were led by not only clergy but also the laity who had what Spener called “a fair knowledge of God.”⁴⁷ These groups were not meant to be separate from the church but where to act like small churches within the whole church. It was in the groups that people were permitted to share their personal feelings and be held accountable to one another. Spener has a keen understanding that intimate contact with each other was able to make relationship and trust stronger between believers. He had experienced this format of “discipleship” previously while he was a young pastor in Frankfurt am Main. In Frankfurt, Spener used to “meet with a group of men in his home where they would read scripture, talk about their sermons, and pray for each other.”⁴⁸ Spener believed that this activity had a profoundly positive effect on his life. He was a pacesetter who moved the church into the direction of relationship building and fellowship in order for all members to grow in the knowledge and grace of God. In this project it is the researcher’s desire to create a similar environment for his church members to thrive within. Currently the context of ministry of focus lack opportunities for laity to fellowship and study together in places that are more intimate than the worship hour. Spener found success in the developing of these groups. James Bemesderfer said that, “these groups were most effective in changing the social structure of Spener’s day.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid., 89.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 90.

⁴⁹ James O. Bemesderfer, “Pietism: The Other Side,” *Journal of Religious Thought* 25, no. 2 (1969): 35.

The third proposal was, “*Christian faith must be put into action. For it is by no means enough to have knowledge of the Christian faith, for Christianity consists rather of practice.*”⁵⁰ Spener said:

If we can therefore awaken a fervent love among Christians, first toward one another and then toward all men (for these two, brotherly affection and general love must supplement each other according to II Peter 1:7), and put this love into practice, practically all that we desire will be accomplished. For all of the commandments are summed up in love.⁵¹

It is here that Spener insists that there can be no separation between faith and practice. In other words if one believes that it works, then they should practice that which they believe. He went as far as to say that people should find a more mature Christian that they could confide in totally. He called the more mature Christian a spiritual director or a Confessor. A major entity of discipleship ministry should be that of spiritual mentorship. The duplication process is never made possible if love within the church is not perceived from the outside world. Spener was adamant on the brethren having love for one another. He mentions that, “Jesus Christ teaches his disciples that they will not be known that they belong to him because of the works that they do, but because they have love for one another.”⁵² It is the intention of the writer to accomplish developing a discipleship ministry that will include a spiritual mentorship entity that encourages the laity of the discipleship ministry to be accountable to newly converted Christians. The hope is that they will be available to new converts or have the ability to connect new converts to people who they trust will be good caregivers of the souls of people. If love does not ooze

⁵⁰ Spener, *Pia Desideria*, 92.

⁵¹ Ibid., 93.

⁵² Ibid., 95.

from the pores of the church not only will discipleship ministry be ineffective, but all ministries will be ineffective.

However, the Piety Movement did not go without some failures. There was a group of “Radical Pietist” started by Johann Jakob Schütz, a lawyer and original member of the original Pietist movement home group in Frankfurt. He believed that there was a better group of Lutherans who were better than other groups. “His group of piety adherents placed sanctification far above justification and they also believed that the *collegia pietatis* was not a church within a church but a church that was separate from the church.”⁵³ As a result many splits began to happen from the original movement. But Spener, in the opinion of the researcher, was very successful in planting a seed for Christian growth, fellowship, and discipleship in the movement that he is considered father. But as history progressed there were others who built on the work of Spener to give the church revival and progression.

John Wesley, Methodism, and Social Holiness

The Pietism Movement has been credited with inspiring an Anglican priest by the name of John Wesley to begin a movement called Wesleyanism and/or Methodism. Many are taught that historically Philipp Jacob Spener personally impacted a young Count Zinzendorf who later started the great Moravian mission. And it was the Moravian crusades that won John and Charles Wesley over to Jesus Christ. Methodism by John

⁵³ Tim Dowley, *The Introduction to the History of Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 445.

Wesley, with the stress on Scripture, obligation to evangelism and edification, practical social compassion, and evangelical ecumenicity, was pietistic to its purest form.

John Wesley was born to an Oxford educated Anglican rector by the name of Samuel Wesley in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England on June 28, 1703. Following in the footsteps of his father, Wesley also attended Oxford University where he and his younger brother Charles were credited in founding a Holy Club. This Holy Club was designed to meet on a weekly basis, and this club closely resembled the work of Philipp Jacob Spener. John and Charles Wesley used this club to give student the opportunity to read the Bible, pray, and work on personal holiness in an intimate setting. This club also fed the poor, visited the sick, and did local missions with an Anglican theological viewpoint.

In 1735 Wesley attempted to travel with James Oglethorpe to the new colony of Georgia to share his religious views. Being discouraged by the strenuous opposition that he encountered on the journey he returned home angry, beaten, and discouraged. Fortunately at a small religious meeting in Aldersgate Street, London led by a Moravian minister named Peter Bohler Wesley was revived out of his discouragement and felt a sense of renewal within his heart. Wesley recalls:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldergate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: Volume Two* (New York: Harper One, 2010), 266.

So, a renewed John Wesley sure of his salvation returned to the Church of England where he regained status as an Anglican Priest. He noticed that there were issues in the Church of England that caused a lack of Christian growth and a lack of numerical growth. Therefore he desired “to awaken and cultivate the faith of the masses in the Church of England, as Pietism was doing for German Lutheranism.”⁵⁵ It was never the wish of Wesley to start a new denomination. As a matter of fact he and his new followers of this cultivation of the church continued to take communion within the worship services of the Church of England. So, John Wesley never started a Methodist Church. The first Methodist churches were founded after the death of Wesley by Francis Asbury.

John Wesley started the movement called Methodism because there was a need for a more profound manifestation of the Christianity in England in his day, and because he was good at persuasive preaching and organizing people into a method his movement began to grow rapidly. “In Bristol, the real birthplace of the movement, Wesley’s followers were organized into societies that at first met in private homes and later had their own buildings.”⁵⁶ But the movement grew too large for the followers to receive effective Christian care. So, “Wesley followed a friend’s suggestion and divided them into classes, each with eleven members and a leader.”⁵⁷ Wesley was always concerned that all who participated in the Methodism Movement were constantly growing. But where Wesley improved the proposals of Spenser for a better church was in the area of ensuring that all members felt connected to the movement. In other words, not only

⁵⁵ Ibid., 268.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 269.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 269.

ministers were given the opportunity to lead and teach, but the laity was also given opportunity to lead and teach in class meetings. This tactic gave much validation too many that would have not gotten the same chance in the Church of England. David Lowes Watson says:

Methodism was forged in the grist and grind of eighteenth-century England, and its folklore is rich in the experiences of ordinary people endeavoring to live as Christians in the world. They took their commitment with sufficient seriousness to want to sustain one another in their discipleship, and they found that the most effective way to do this was to meet together once a week in order to be accountable to one another.⁵⁸

One of the main focuses of the classroom meeting was to have sub-groups called bands where people were encouraged to engage in what Wesley called, “close conversation where the motive was directed toward soul-searching examination.”⁵⁹ In these settings behavior, theology, and ideas often became secondary to heart felt expressions toward each other. These bands would also so celebrate together at ticket only admissions called “Love Feast” or “The Agape Meal.” It was in these functions that Wesley introduced friendly fellowship to the gathering of saints together. They ate together and shared in community together in order to foster a connection that people were reluctant to leave. These gatherings were considered to be such an experience that Wesley “indicates that they had an immediacy and an impact which could easily be misunderstood by those not aware of the nature of the gathering.”⁶⁰ The people of this movement enjoyed each other.

⁵⁸ David L. Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1985), 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 119-120.

Why would Wesley be so insistent on fellowship even beyond the classroom setting? And why did he live a life with such a mission minded focus? The answer is that overall Wesley believed in Social Holiness. He did not believe in a solitary religion. He was firm on the biblical rule to love your neighbor as you love yourself. John Wesley believed that, “the aim of his life, the organizing centre of his thought, the spring of all action, his one abiding project was holiness.”⁶¹ He once said there is no holiness but social holiness. Wesley wanted to spread holiness throughout the land with people who portrayed genuine holiness. In this way others would be attracted to what he wanted to do for Jesus Christ which was to counter a privatized notion of the Christian faith. He even desired to include people of color and is noted for being an abolitionist that spoke out against slavery in his efforts of social holiness.

The researcher recognizes that although Wesley was influenced by Pietism yet he had a more inclusive nature that included fun fellowship (Love Feast) designed to make stronger bonds between Christians. When bonds of friendships are made it gives the local church a better chance at discipleship. Because, “the more friendships a person has in a congregation, the less likely he or she is to become inactive or leave.”⁶² When the people of the church can have fun fellowship in addition to intimate learning the church has the possibility to be view as more attractive. But when a church has the notion of a privatized faith that does not reach all sectors of the community it can be viewed as an exclusive club and not an inclusive organism.

⁶¹ Theodore W Jennings Jr., *Good News to the Poor* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 140.

⁶² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 324.

Unfortunately, as successful as John Wesley was with the Methodism Movement he ended his life feeling as though his quest for social holiness failed. The Methodists that he led began to raise money to the point where many started to desire personal prosperity. It has been believed that John Wesley at the ripe age of eighty-six was seen knocking on doors alone to collect funds for the poor. Near his last days he said:

I am distressed. I know not what to do. I see what I might have done once. I might have said peremptorily and expressly, 'here I am: I and my bible. I will not, I dare not, vary from this book, either in great things or small. I have no power to dispense with one jot or tittle of what is contained therein. I am determined to be a Bible Christian, not almost, but altogether. Who will meet me on this ground? Join me on this or not at all . . .' But, alas! The time is now passed; and what I can do now, I cannot tell. (Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity, Works VII: 287-88).⁶³

There are many churches that have subscribed to the prosperity Gospel that tends to give off an exclusive vibe. But the researcher believes that discipleship ministry must also give opportunities for all to participate in outreach ministry for the sake of inclusion in the local church. Separations of any kind in the Christian church take away a churches ability to fulfil the great commission of Jesus Christ.

Richard Allen and Colonization Rejection

If anyone in history should have given up on racial redemption in America Richard Allen surely could have been the first candidate to say that America was a hopeless case. The history of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was and is one of the premier examples of how blacks in America were not appreciated. But not only were

⁶³ Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity, Works VII: 287-88.

they not appreciated they were not even wanted in respects to worshipping together with white Americans the God of all creation.

Richard Allen spent the majority of his days in slavery on the Sturgis plantation in Delaware. But as a young man he worked diligently enough to purchase his freedom and by the age of twenty-six years old he was licensed as a Methodist preacher. He was relegated to preaching early morning services and began to draw the attention of black worshippers. But it was in 1787 while those of African descent were on their knees praying that white Methodist violently pulled them out of the church in efforts to gain unfair and unjust separation. “As news of the demonstration spread, Blacks in Boston northern cities walked out of segregated institutions and created their own. Five months later, in April 1787, Allen and Jones responded by creating the Free African Society.”⁶⁴

From this horrific debacle the African Methodist Episcopal church was formed by blacks who wanted to maintain their Methodist connection. It would seem that Richard Allen would have been the first proponent of a movement where freed blacks could go to a pre-purchased portion of the West African coast to colonize and create their own freedom.

For a long time Allen struggled with the decision to support Blacks staying in America or leaving for the Western Shores of Africa. Richard Newman said:

By examining the prospect of racial justice overseas, Allen publicly testified to his divided soul. He was an American but not an American, a freeman but not a freeman, a man dedicated to saving America from racial sin and a man in search

⁶⁴ Richard Green and Phyllis Ragsdale, *A Salute to Black Abolitionists* (Chicago: Empak Publishing Co., 1996), 228.

of a country free from racial sin. He was an African-American and an African trapped in America.⁶⁵

So the question is why would Richard Allen eventually opt to stay in America?

The first reason was an undying desire to continue to preach a Gospel that would at some point prick the sinful heart of racism in America. The mark of true ministry for Jesus Christ is a desire to address the infection of sin. Racism is but one of the many by-products of sin. But Allen understood that if he was to advocate for separation he would not have the chance preach the Gospel to achieve a true heart conversion in American. The second reason was he had a heart for the poor young African-Americans that could not afford to participate in African colonization. “Allen was a staunch supporter of the Anti-Slavery societies, yet he eloquently opposed Colonization Societies on the basis that “its philosophy of removal of Afro-Americans from the United States was based on racial prejudice rather than benevolence.”⁶⁶

Here is where his desire for discipleship appears. He wanted the chance to protect the rights of young black Americans so that he could show them that God do care for them even though they were in tumultuous living situations. “Allen was not convinced that future generations of free blacks could mimic his success.”⁶⁷ But Richard Allen also felt that blacks had earned their place in America. Allen proclaimed that “this land that we had watered with our blood and tears is now our mother land.”⁶⁸ Therefore Richard Allen recognized that he became a successful business man and Bishop in a strange land

⁶⁵ Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet* (New York: New York University Press), 184.

⁶⁶ Green and Ragsdale, *A Salute to Black Abolitionists*, 229.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

with the help of God and had to come to the conclusion that God was able to do it for others. Therefore Richard Allen formed another group that would aid in helping young blacks to not only have spiritual growth, but also have success in their secular lives in America. “This spiritual revelation birthed yet another of Allen’s major accomplishments was the organizing of the Society of Free People of Color for Promoting Instruction and School Education of Children of African Descent.”⁶⁹ His decision to reject separation in the end led to one of the largest independent African-American denominations in America. He also created an African-American society that “featured a mutual aid society, a church, a political structure, and an insurance company.”⁷⁰

The true mark of discipleship rejects the ideology of separation and cares for those who are coming behind you. Therefore discipleship ministries must also lovingly address sin; care for the youth of the local church, and believe in the power of God to do for others what God has done you us in our salvation. Our successes in life are indicative of the grace that God bestows upon all flesh. In the local church there is sometimes the tendency to have separated groups and cliques within the church body. There are times when many individuals experience church hurt, feeling discriminated against and left out for a plethora of reasons.

Richard Allen, who was influenced by John Wesley, came to the same conclusion as Wesley. There is no holiness but social holiness! Discipleship does not discriminate and it finds a way to eradicate issues that cause separation. The ultimate rejection of Colonization is an example to us all to make every attempt to create unity in the church.

⁶⁹ Green and Ragsdale, 229.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 229.

The researcher has proven that history shows us the people can be developed and Christian movements flourish when someone is willing to set the pace for change, relationships are built, fellowship is a priority, and discipleship is effective. This historical foundation will allow the writer to continue to build his project to develop a discipleship ministry in a church that has challenges with retention and fellowship. The examples of discipleship within this historical document can and will aid the research in the implementation of a church that is more focused on people development as opposed to program development. All of the aforementioned examples stress intimacy, relationship building, fellowship, and in the case of John Wesley celebration too.

Theological Foundations

Thus far, the biblical and historical foundations have made a strong case for leaders initiating the building of relationships in order to have successful church ministry and discipleship. Throughout the course of history the social striving of humanity for identity and destiny in civilization has expended much thinking on relationships. The efforts of mankind to research our relationships to one another have taken us to the study of sociology. Humanity has a yearning to discern where they are accepted in creation has produced a science. Inasmuch the quest for our relationship to God came forth religion. God is passionately interpersonal. Community is secured within the attributes of God and conveyed all the way through the character of God as revealed to humanity. In the pursuit for a manifestation of a church community that will be a reflection to God, we cannot set out on a journey that is divested from the nature of God as our foundation.

From the onset of these theoretical foundations the researcher has been making the valiant effort to present a case for his contextual analysis. The goal of his congregational research is the attempt to prove that effective disciple making churches must design a poignant plan to encourage effective relationship building. This kind of relationship building coupled with the sharing of lives together in community (fellowship) can induce an attractiveness that is needed for a local church to successfully fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

For the theological foundation portion of this research the writer will use the theological premise of ecclesiology to discuss the original purposes that the relational God desired for the church. This paper will begin with a discussion on what ecclesiology is all about. Afterwards the paper will continue to build the case that a functional church that is effective in performing purposes of God, including but not limited to discipleship, must reflect who God is. Therefore the paper will talk about what the church must understand about a Trinitarian God in order to know what they are supposed to reflect as images of this God. Next, the paper will conclude by talking about the *koinonia* and the permanent place that intimate community is to have in the life of the church in order to remain vibrant, attractive, loving, and doing the kind of ministry that will produce disciples. Finally, this document will briefly discuss pastoral theology since the pastor desires to be the pacesetter within this paradigm shift.

Ecclesiology

Systematic theology has been described as a “system of truth”⁷¹ that aids Christians to understand Christianity in a rational yet coherent way. “Systematics, sometimes called Dogmatics, divides what it has to give us into six divisions as follows: theology, anthropology, Christology, soteriology, eschatology, and ecclesiology.”⁷² Each division teaches Christians how to get closer to God in the various ways described in each division. Theology is the doctrine or the study of God. The questions of theology deals with the existence and the nature of God to investigate “the knowability of God.”⁷³ The basic study of theology teaches that God is in no sense correlative to or dependent upon anything else besides the being of God. God is also immutable and does not change since there is nothing besides the eternal being of God on which God depends. And God is unified. “The unity of singularity has reference to numerical oneness.

There is and can only be one God.”⁷⁴ The will of God is self-reliant and the personal God is Triune, which the paper will talk about in more detail later. Anthropology is the study or the doctrine of man/woman. This aspect will also be discussed later in the paper as the researcher will talk about how man/woman reflects God. Christology is the study or the Doctrine of Jesus Christ which details the activity that was able to bring man back to God. Simply put, it is taught in Christology that Jesus serves as a bridge between God and mankind. Soteriology is the study and the question of

⁷¹ Van Til, 21.

⁷² Ibid., 23.

⁷³ Ibid., 24.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 25.

salvation. “In soteriology we deal with the application to us of the redemption Christ has wrought for us. But real redemption has not been fully wrought for us till it is wrought also within us.”⁷⁵ Eschatology is the study of the end times. In eschatology the Christian believes that God holds the future and has plans for the future. And with this belief the Christian has eternal hope that the victory will ultimately belong to God at the end.

Finally there is ecclesiology by which the theological foundation of this paper stands. Ecclesiology is the study or the doctrine of the church, which is the vehicle that Christ chose for the spreading of the Gospel. At this point the researcher can ask the question to put together the pieces of systematic theology in connection with ecclesiology. The question is: how does this system that depicts a God who saves by connecting himself to man through Jesus Christ and his saving power become the foundation by which the church is built? The answer is, “the church consists of mankind who are partakers of Christ and of the blessings of salvation that are in Him.”⁷⁶ The people of the church are save by the work or the activity of God through Jesus Christ. The church is to proclaim the victory that they have in Christ over death, hell, and the grave. They are also to spread the good news that the death of Jesus Christ cancelled out the penalty for sin and the church is the vehicle used for this task. Louis Berkhof says:

The reformed conception is that Christ, by operation of the Holy Spirit, unites men with Himself, endows them with true faith, and thus constitutes the church as His body, the *communio fidelium* or *sanctorum*. It is not Christ that leads us to the church but it is the church that leads us to Christ. So, all of the emphasis falls, not on the invisible Church as the *communio fidelium*, but on the visible church as the *mater fidelium*.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid., 51.

⁷⁶ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 553.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 553.

This statement gives validation to the ideology of the writer of making the church attractive because it is the visible church that is seen by the human eye that is responsible for leading people to Jesus Christ. The church must look organized, loving, fun, united, and speaking the same language in order to attract those who are looking at the church. A valid question for any local church congregation would be: how does your church look to its surrounding community? However most churches fail to ask that question due to the fact that when systematic theology is being discussed rarely does the division of ecclesiology come to the forefront of conversations. Berkhof recalls:

It seems rather peculiar that practically all the outstanding Presbyterian dogmaticians of our country, such as the two Hodges, H.B. Smith, Shedd, and Dabney, have no separate locus on the church in their dogmatic works and in fact devote very little attention to it.⁷⁸

It is even very difficult to find scholarly work on ecclesiology in the present day. At this point the paper will continue in a detailed discussion of ecclesiology and talk about the Old and New Testament names for the church and the nature of the church.

Louis Berkhof writes:

The Old testament employs two words to designate the church, namely *qahal*, derived from an obsolete root *qal* meaning: “to call”; and *'edhah*, from *ya'adh*, “to appoint” or “to meet or come together at an appointed place.” These two words are sometimes used indiscriminately, but were not, at first, strictly synonymous. *'Edhah* is properly a gathering by appointment, and when applied to Israel, denotes the society itself formed by the children of Israel or their representative heads, whether assembled or not assembled. *Qahal*, on the other hand, properly denotes the actual meeting of people together. Consequently we find occasionally the expression *qahal 'edhah*, that is, “the assembly of the

⁷⁸ Ibid., 553.

congregation. It seems that the actual meeting was sometimes a meeting of representatives of the people.”⁷⁹

In the Old Testament Berkhof seemingly gives the notion that the shadow of the church that we find in the Old Testament gives students of the church the view of community. The Old Testament view of the pre-church repetitiously denotes that of gathering and of assembly. This is the formation of a community in one place together. The Old Testament pre-church also seems to point to the fact that they were like minded individuals. These terms point to the children of Israel. They were to serve God faithfully and anticipate the coming of the Messiah. They all spoke the same language although they may have had different personal gifts to donate to this cause. Discipleship is not a term that can be found in the Old Testament writ. The Children of Israel were the chosen people of God by birth.

However the Old Testament does present its readers with many persons who were considered proselytes. Proselytes were persons who had converted from one opinion, religion, or party to another, especially converting from Gentile to Judaism. Many of these proselytes were very noted in the Old Testament such as Uriah who was a Hittite and praised for being one of the mighty men of valor King David. There is also Ruth who was a Moabite and represents one of the forty and two generations that Jesus came through. The aforementioned statement is significant because it leads us to the realization that the lineage of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, was not one hundred percent Jew. So there were those whom representatives of Judaism embraced and taught in order to give them a

⁷⁹ Ibid., 555.

true conversion in believing in the one and only true God. Although this was rare it did happen at times.

Then Berkhof writes:

The New Testament also has two words, derived from the Septuagint, namely, *ekklesia*, from *ek* and *kaleo*, ‘to call out,’ and *sunagoge*, from *sun* and *ago*, meaning ‘to come or to bring together.’ The latter is used exclusively to denote either the religious gatherings of the Jews or the building in which they assembled for public worship. The term *ekklesia*, however, generally designates the church of the New Testament, though in a few places it denotes common civil assemblies. The preposition *ek* in *ekklesia* is often is often interpreted to mean ‘out from among the common mass of people,’ and to indicate in connection with the Scriptural use of *ekklesia*, that the church consists of the elect, called out of the world of humanity.⁸⁰

Here we see Berkhof make a noticeable difference between the Old Testament pre-church and the New Testament church. The New Testament words seem to focus on a select group of people going out to bring people together in a community. The command of Jesus Christ was for his apostles to go out and make disciples of all nations. Therefore the writer focuses on discipleship with the understanding that it is supposed to be done by the church.

The church is to also possess a certain nature. “For both Martin Luther and John Calvin the church was simply a community of the saints, that is, the community of those who believe and are sanctified in Christ and who are joined to Him as their head.”⁸¹ The nature of the church totally believes in and depends on the work for Jesus Christ for its sanctification and justification. “Thus the Belgic Confession says, ‘We believe in one universal Church, which is a holy congregation of True Christian believers, all expecting

⁸⁰ Ibid., 556.

⁸¹ Ibid., 564.

their salvation in Jesus, being washed by his blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.”⁸² And the church is supposed to believe in a Triune God while intimately sharing their lives together.

Ecclesiology and the Trinity

The God of the Christian Church is the one and only Trinitarian God. This God is the representation of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. “Tertillian was the first to use the term “Trinity” and to formulate the doctrine, but his formulation was deficient, since it involved an unwarranted subordination of the Father to the son.”⁸³ There were others such as Origen that maintained there was a step down in rank from the Father to the Son to the Holy Spirit. Augustine was the first to give some equality to the three in the Godhead. All three persons of the Godhead are equal. Cornelius Van Til writes:

God exists in himself as a triune self-consciously active being. The Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit are each a personality and all together constitute the exhaustively personal God. There is an eternal, internal self-conscious interaction between the three persons of the Godhead. They are co-substantial. Each is as much God as the other two. The Son and the Spirit do not derive their being from the Father. The diversity and the unity in the Godhead are therefore equally ultimate; they are exhaustively correlative to one another and not correlative to anything else.⁸⁴

This doctrine exemplifies a specific partnership within God as God rules and subdues all of creation. That means that there is relationship within the character of God. Everything that was in infinity ancient was in the Trinity. The only relationship was God

⁸² Ibid., 565

⁸³ Berkhof, 82.

⁸⁴ Van Til, 29.

to the self of God. The shown inward workings of God are relational. C.S. Lewis says that without a Trinity, God could not have been love. “The words ‘God is love’ have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love.”⁸⁵

God is love according to the scriptures. Love by itself occurs as of how the Trinity shares within itself. Where did relationship begin? This relationship began within the secreted innermost mechanisms of God. When mankind peeks into relationships it is basically a theological interrogation. The loving kindness and sympathy of God is obvious throughout all the scriptures. The times in the past when the persons of God hindered God repetitively, when covenants signed in blood and avowed by the name of the highest in the land lay fragmented and bleak, when the people of God warranted abhorrence, God was still Love. In Hosea, the anger and rage of God is being outpoured, yet it is displayed in the story of two lovers where one constantly loves the other through all faults and mistakes. The story exhibits the purest human form of unconditional love.

“The communicable attributes of God stress God’s personality, since they reveal God as a rational and moral being.”⁸⁶ The doctrine of the trinity that the Christian church believes reveals a relational God who desires relationship to give love that in its purest form is God. So if God is such a relational being then it is without a doubt that as humans we are relational as well. This must be the case because man was created in the *imago*

⁸⁵ C. S. Lewis. *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 1980), 174.

⁸⁶ Berkhof, 84.

Dei (image of God). This means that man not only takes on the characteristic of thinking and intellect but man also takes on the relational nature of God. “What [Karl Barth] has helped us understand is that relationship is at the heart of what it means to be ‘in the image of God’ and that the relationship between male and female is the human expression of our relationship with God.”⁸⁷

It was insightful that in fashioning mankind to mirror the very nature of God, God made a desire within Adam for relationship. It is interesting to note that after God acknowledged the reality that it was not good for man to be alone that God did not immediately create a mate for Adam. God gave Adam the opportunity to use his intellect and creativity. Adam was given a job to name the animals. But it was in this moment that the desire for companionship was made in Adam. As Adam came face to face with the animals that he named he noticed that none of them looked like him, sounded like him, or could communicate with him. There was not a companion that was on the recently made planet preordained for Adam, thus God built a companion that fit Adam.

At that point man was complete *imago Dei* the precise image of the everlasting trinity, made to commune with God, wife, and the creation in which he lived. The aforementioned story of Adam is positive proof that in current times it is impossible to find complete satisfaction in our talents, gifts, and work if there is no one to share these awesome assets. There is not one person who was created to find total satisfaction without companionship because no one was designed to operate outside of the image of God successfully. What the fellowship of Manasseh Baptist church will realize as a result of this project is the spiritual gifts they possess to do the work of the kingdom are not

⁸⁷ Richard J. Foster, *The Challenge of the Disciplined Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), 92.

enough to make disciples. Their ministries can have the most qualified and gifted candidates to lead, however disciple-making through these ministries must wish to operate in the image of God. They must understand that working in community as opposed to alone is the way that they were designed as a part of the human race that God created in the image of God.

The church is to not only profess her belief in the Trinity but she is to also live this doctrine in her everyday life. The church is to worship in order to commune with God, share with the lives of others within the church, and go into the world around them those disciples for Christ will be made.

There are two distinctions of the Trinity. There is the ontological Trinity and the economical Trinity. The economical Trinity means, “The distinction of persons within the Godhead in so far as this distinction has bearing on the works of God with respect to the created universe.”⁸⁸ The Father is active in creation while sustaining the universe, the Son is active in the objective work of salvation (what mankind has no bearing in/on), and the Holy Spirit is active in the subjective work of salvation (the help for mankind in persevering through their salvation). But the ontological Trinity goes back to God being God without any assistance from any outside source. Therefore our profession of the Trinity understands how the Godhead works on our behalf in an equal relationship. And the understanding that mankind is made in the image of God must act out this belief in order to perform successful discipleship.

Relationships in the local church must also see themselves as equals regardless of titles that one may receive in their economical workings within the church. It does not

⁸⁸ Van Til, 29.

matter how high someone may rise in reference to their work within the church they must understand that ontologically the pastor is no different than the typical pew sitting Christian that is not very active in the church. In essence true relationships have an air of humility that causes people of a local body to be friendly with one another irrespective of rank. It is in these moments that the pores of the church should exude love. The church body is to understand that all within are in need of the salvation that they profess.

Another characteristic of the Trinity is that all three are in covenant with each other as they work together. They agree with each other in all that is done. For example the Father and the Son were in full agreement about Calvary as the Son subdued his will to the will of the Father. A covenant is a bond that is formed for the purposes of creating or saving life. Likewise the church must find herself in covenant within its wall if she is to be effective outside of her walls and effectively make disciples.

As a church we display the image of God in unity. This is why the context of ministry for this project must do everything and anything possible to always make every effort to keep the unity. Where there is division there will occur weakness. However there is much strength in unity. "The Johannine author affirms that the unity of the church is based on the unity between the Father and the Son, and that the purpose of church unity is that the world may believe that the Father has sent the Son."⁸⁹ The goal of this project is to build relationships that resemble the Trinity. Like the Trinity, the church should be unified, focus on equality so that nobody feels ontologically exalted above another, economically working within their particular gift setting, and desiring love with one

⁸⁹ Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 3rd ed. (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 271.

another. If God in the powerful self of God can see the need to be relational, the people of God should also understand that by being made in the image of God they are also in need of relationships to perform effective ministry.

Koinonia

“*Koinonia* is an exciting Greek word that appears approximately twenty times in the New Testament.”⁹⁰ *Koinonia* is a derivative of a Greek word that means to commune by intimate participation. *Koinonia* identifies the kind of fellowship that is supposed to be present in the community of the Christian Church. Relationships are expressed within a community. The *koinonia* is also the most prevalent way that the church acts out its belief in the Trinity. But the question is has the church found a way to get lost in division and formality? If the church is going to be effective in the disciple making process the church is going to have to be in intimate community together.

A cohesive community is not merely the picture of the church; Christian community is an imperative portion of our individual development. There is a lot more to this kind of intimate relationship than just networking, support, and the joy of friendship. In the Spirit, there is a supernatural linking of souls, a compulsory tying with the cords of the Spirit and love. In the act of corporate worship and seeking, we are bound together. The pastor is such an intricate part of the worship service. “From the pastor there must flow warmth, dedication, and enthusiasm.”⁹¹ In worship, our spirits are methodically

⁹⁰ Donald W. Bartow, *Creative Churchmanship* (New York, NY: World Publishing, 1969), 140.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

vulnerable to each other in a way that is not known to most. In fact it is this openness of love that needs to be the brand of Christian community.

“We live in a technological age where there is much emphasis upon things but little heed is paid to people.”⁹² Therefore, it is challenging for a society so concentrated on individuality and their existential reality to fully comprehend the spiritual dynamic of community. We believe and have been taught in some circles that our salvation is a private matter. While it is true that our relationship with Christ exists in a realm of private dialogues, inward submission and quiet daily decisions, that relationship also happens in a very public world of social interactions. When the private silent world is open, exposed, and naked to the social world utter transformation is possible.

Discipleship occurs between believers when they are truthful and transparent with one another. Community permits each disciple of the body to be fortified by the others. The feeble disciples are cared by the open wounds of the stronger disciples. The weaker members can minister unto the stronger members also. According to the Apostle Paul, God in the mercy of God uses the weak to confound the wise. As the stronger ones serve the weaker they put themselves under the discipline of God the Holy Spirit and grow.

Community strengthens and stretches all of us. Worship is another community expression that transcends individualism, or at least it can. The open hearts Thomas Kelly writes about have a direct connection to worship when he says:

A quickening Presence pervades us, breaking down some part of the special privacy and isolation of our individual lives and blending our spirits within a super individual Life and Power. An objective, dynamic Presence enfolds us all,

⁹² Ibid., 141.

nourishes our souls, speaks glad, unutterable comfort with us, and quickens us in depths that had before been slumbering.⁹³

The worship of a single heart is made complete when joined by another. Worship ranks among the most intimate expressions we have. True worship is rare in our corporate settings because that level of intimacy is uncomfortable to express with another. At best, we express ourselves oblivious to those around us, but open transcendent worship is the jewel of our corporate spiritual experience.

The mystic side of community relationship is not simply a matter of observation. The scripture bears witness that there are spiritual elements to the community of believers. Every time Paul references the gifts of the Spirit, they are in the context of the body. Sandwiched in the middle of his discussion on the manifestations of the Spirit is a treatment of unity. Essential to the experience of Paul of the work of the Spirit is its work in the body. “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”⁹⁴ God gave gifts of the Spirit, manifestation gifts and office gifts alike, to edify the body of believers. The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Son. In the community of believers, this supernatural spiritual working pulls them to intimacy with Christ together individually and in single-hearted unity.

The model spiritual life is incorporated and incarnational. Most churches and Christians are familiar with a life of great dichotomy. We live in the two worlds of spiritual and secular. From every pulpit ministers try to teach individuals how to live their lives in line with the gospel. The seventeenth century cook, Brother Lawrence was

⁹³ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1988), 164.

⁹⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV).

known for his continual “Practice of the Presence of God.” He would say, “That our sanctification did not depend upon changing our works, but in doing that for God’s sake, which we commonly do for our own.”⁹⁵ He found the presence of God most sweetly as he endeavored to think on him every moment while he was at work in the kitchen.

It is not necessary for being with God to be always at church. We may make an oratory of our heart wherein to retire from time to time to converse with Him in meekness, humility, and love. Everyone is capable of such familiar conversation with God, some more, some less. He knows what we can do. Let us begin then.⁹⁶

Instead of the spiritual ideology of the integrated life, we experience a sharp divide between secular and sacred. In other words, the need for *koinonia* among the local congregation must extend beyond the walls of the church building if this divide of the secular and spiritual is going to dissolve. The world sees this dichotomy when they talk about hypocrisy. They see the church as a place for ‘perfect’ persons, or more truthfully, a place where hypocrites attend to feel good about themselves.

The church does not present itself to provide a Christian environment that serve as an escape from the earth. As the former pastor of the writer used to say, “We are not the salt of the sanctuary; we are the salt of the earth.” The objective is not to duplicate community and social gatherings in the walls of the church building to make them tolerable. If then, the genuine Christian community has little to do with the four walled structure we call the church, why do we come together on Sunday mornings?

The mission of the church is threefold. The church exists: “To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world . . . To be the corporate body in which man may worship

⁹⁵ Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, *The Practice of the Presence of God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1999), 9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

God . . . To be the channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son."⁹⁷ Of the three, evangelism and discipleship can effortlessly be performed outside the walls of church. Corporate worship requires the body of believers. Sunday morning and other services occur to offer a liturgy for our communal worship of God. The other facets of ecclesiastical ministry can be done devoid of the formality of a service or the arrangement of religious ceremony, but true worship necessitates more. The community must be brought together into a single united heart and corporately engrossed on the Majestic One. The main purpose then for the ceremonial meeting of the church is liturgical. The "real" church must never be mixed up with the deed of "having church." The reason we "have church" is worship, but the church is the body. Therefore the theological aim of this project is to motivate Manasseh Baptist Church to fully understand the attributes of the Triune God and act out those attributes they believe through *koinonia*.

Finally the church is led by a pastor. In this project the pastor is commissioned to set the pace of leading a church to becoming a relationship building, disciple making church. The last portion of ecclesiology this paper will discuss is that of pastoral theology. Pastoral theology is a rather new idea within the realm of theological studies. Although this study is fairly new it is a much needed subject within the life of ecclesiology. James Harris defines pastoral theology as, "a praxis that deals with the

⁹⁷ *Minutes of the 47th Session of the General Council of the Assemblies of God with Revised Constitution and Bylaws* (Springfield: The General Council of the Assemblies of God, 1997), 109.

development of people, policies, and programs in the church and community that convey the meaning of Christianity in practical life situations.”⁹⁸

He goes on to expound upon this definition by saying, “The pastor must have a clear vision for ministry and a clear plan for accomplishing that vision through the people who constitute the church and community.”⁹⁹ His definition certainly validates why the pastor should be the pacesetter for any spiritual shift that happens in the life of the church. Therefore the pastoral theology of the pastor is the initiator of *koinonia*. Pastoral responsibility demands that a pastor is always developing plan with clear instructions and clearly defined goals in every facet that the church offers. Pastoral theology says that a pastor should have a clear vision and plan for worship, men, women, pastoral care, counseling, Christian Education, youth, young adults, administration, finances, and overall church growth and development.

The researcher serves as pastor of the context of ministry where this project will be performed. As the pastor, there must be a developed ideology of how all tasks in the church should be performed. The pastor is to operate in the image of God just as the church because the ultimate job of the pastor is to lead the church in a way that the church can be an attractive vessel that can lead people to Jesus Christ. Therefore being a pastor is a calling. The gift of the pastor is to have a spiritual inclination to effectively administrate the church, plan for evangelism, develop worship, bridge the age and generational gaps, and create an operative Christian education department. His/her goal is to use this gift setting to encourage old and new disciples to be involved. In the business

⁹⁸ James H. Harris, *Pastoral Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), ix.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, ix.

world there is a Japanese model for managing productivity call Theory Z. “Theory Z suggest that involved workers are the key to productivity.”¹⁰⁰ As a church, the challenge for the body is the increasing struggle to get people involved. However intimacy and connectivity has a tendency to encourage involvement. “Relationships are the glue that holds churches together. Friendships are the key to retaining members.”¹⁰¹

For the sake of this project, the pastor will use the Christian education department because of the intimacy it provides in the various classes that cater to people of like statuses to encourage involvement. In this project people will not be invited to worship service after fellowship, they will be invited to Christian education to continue the intimacy and relationship building that is required for productive discipleship. The theological foundations mentioned in this document are central to the Christian faith. Therefore the researcher will develop a project designed to get the attention of the context of ministry shifted toward these theological truths.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 83.

¹⁰¹ Warren, 324.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a statement of expectancy or prediction that is tested by action research. Although a hypothesis is a statement the is made to be proven by further research, there should be resources read prior to making a hypothesis statement. The researcher has interacted with various authors of literature to come up with a hypothesis that is worthy of research.

The first thing that the researcher did was identified a problem by asking questions about the context of ministry. The researcher has looked at the activity and the lack of activity in the context of ministry and asked: Why is the context of ministry getting new members but not growing? How is the researcher addressing issues of retention? Why do individuals fail to stay after making a conscious decision to become members of the context of ministry? What has the researcher been teaching and preaching? And what does the context of ministry have to offer that would entice someone to feel connected?

Considering, the greatest asset of the church is its people; how can the people participate in changing the current plight of the context of ministry? Therefore, the researcher has identified the problem within the context of ministry as having no

established entity within itself to motivate church members to understand the need for ministry opportunities that cater to discipleship and fellowship. This combined with little to no activities outside of worship and a deficiency in membership retention leads to stalled church growth, lack of connectivity between membership, and delayed development of effective ministries that cater to the needs of the church and community. Authors, such as Bill Hybels, Bill Hull, David Kinnaman, Rick Warren, and others have published works that agree that people must feel a connection to the churches they become a choose to join. They believe that the intimate ministry of discipleship and multiplication in the answer. D. James Kennedy said, “Building friendships is essential for effective discipleship.”¹

David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons took the time to investigate the image that the church protrudes to an un-churched generation they called mosaics and busters, ranging from the ages eighteen to forty-one. In their book *UnChristian*, they contend that most people they contacted for their research believed, “Christianity is introverted and out of tune with the real world choices, challenges, and lifestyles they face. Only one-fifth of young outsiders believe that an active faith helps people live a better, more fulfilling life.”² Kinnaman and Lyons have a research that shows us that the people of Christianity have lost its attractiveness. “In 1996 eighty-five percent outsiders and persons of other faiths viewed Christianity as having a strong positive image. A decade later, thirty-eight

¹ D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 4th ed. (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1996), 54.

² David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 120.

percent of the same group sample view Christianity as having a bad image.”³ The researcher sought to see if these personality traits were present in the context of ministry and if so, also attempted to lead a charge to circumvent these personality traits in the life of the church.

So, the hypothesis statement for this project is if the local church identifies people who are best suited for discipleship ministry through their personality type, integrates biblical preaching and teaching on the importance of building relationships combined with enjoyable activities that can induce the intentional development of personal friendships, then discipleship will be effective enough to foster an environment that will resolve the issues of stalled growth because of retention problems in the church due to lack of connectivity.

Research Design

The researcher began this particular project by studying various viewpoints of authors on the ministry of discipleship. After reading David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons' research on the church and its discipleship and attractiveness and/or the lack thereof; the researcher decided that the best type of research method for this study was to use a mixed method design. A mixed method research design is a technique used to collect, analyze, and mix both quantitative and qualitative data within a single study to understand a research problem more completely. John W. Creswell says, “It is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it also involve the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or

³ Ibid., 22.

quantitative research.”⁴ Furthermore the researcher methodologically added to mixed method research by elaborating the procedural issues of sequential explanatory design by connecting the quantitative and qualitative data within this study and integrating the results of the sequential phases of the study. “Sequential mixed methods study “may begin with quantitative method in which a theory or concept is tested, followed by a qualitative method involving detailed exploration with a few cases or individuals.”⁵ The sequential phases of the study collected quantitative data followed by qualitative data in order to analyze the numerical information received from a focus group from the context of ministry, an external group invited to fellowship with the focus group of the project, and the context of ministry as a whole. The qualitative data from the aforementioned three groups explored in an in-depth manner the numerical information received.

Mixed method research was chosen because the researcher used two forms of measuring data quantitatively and two forms of measuring data qualitatively. Quantitative data “can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures.”⁶ And qualitative data is “typically collected in the participant’s setting. The data analysis inductively builds from particulars to general themes, and the researcher makes interpretations of the meaning of the data.”⁷ Therefore mixed method research from numerical and text data collected sequentially can better

⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2009), 4.

⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷ Ibid., 4.

help the researcher understand and deal with the research problem in the context of ministry.

The researcher also determined that the sequential mixed method was the best method of research for this project because the context of ministry as a whole was not made aware that they were participating in a Doctor of Ministry project. The researcher felt that if this information was disclosed the participants in the study would possibly give numerical and textual information that was skewed, distorted, and impure in nature. The only people of the context of ministry that were made aware of the project in detail were the associate ministers of Manasseh Baptist Church who served as context associates; helping the researcher supervise and smoothly implement the project. Therefore the participants in the project were not able to give answers that they thought would help researcher obtain his desired results from the project. Implementing the project in this way proved to be most effective because by the end of the project the researcher was made aware of feelings and nuances that he was never made aware of before the project began.

Measurement

In order to get a full understanding of how a leader-teacher leadership through word and deeds can affect how effective discipleship ministry could be it was decided that the researcher-leader would be advantaged if he would have a personality profile assessment administered to ten individuals that would be collected and analyzed after the project ended. At the beginning and end of the project these same ten individuals would also be surveyed on where they stood in regards to discipleship. The result of the pre and

post survey was quantitative and the personality profile assessment was qualitative data. Later the researcher compared the numerical quantitative data of the surveys to the qualitative data of the personality profile assessment to determine if a specific personality type had any bearing on how effective they were in discipleship ministry.

A random sampling of members of the context of ministry was taken by computer selection to assure an unbiased selection. The ten people selected were then identified as the focus group. On Sunday March 3, 2013 each participant of the focus group met at Manasseh Baptist Church during the Sunday School hour and was invited to be a part of a new discipleship ministry that the pastor and associate ministers were trying to start at the context of ministry. The first ten of the random sampling of the context of ministry agreed to participate in this endeavor. They were guaranteed that their personality profile assessments and surveys would be protected with the utmost confidentiality. Due to the nature of confidentiality and testing their personality an agreement was signed by each participant along with the researcher as a part of the participant package (see Appendix A). Other items in the participant's package was the survey that would be taken on the first day of training and administered again at the end of the project, Bill Hybels, and his *Becoming a Contagious Christian* training workbook, and the DiSC personality profile assessment to be taken at the end of the project also (Appendix A). After the pre-survey was taken, the participants engaged in a six-week training on how to become a contagious Christian that will be discuss further in Chapter Five. Eight of the participants were present at each training session. One participant missed one session because of illness and the other participant missed three sessions due to a work scheduling conflict.

However, these two participants were taught the sessions they missed at a different time by the researcher in the office of the researcher.

Concurrently, the researcher began a four week preaching series entitled, *Relational Discipleship: Growing the Church from the Outside In* and on Wednesday March 6, 2013 the researcher started a four week Bible study series entitled, *Discipleship between Paul and Thessalonica* (see Appendix B). The researcher used this method to analyze and observe the context of ministry as a whole. The researcher compared the number of church visitations, conversions, and Christian experience memberships with the number of the same from March 2, 2012 to May 18, 2012 with March 3, 2013 to May 19, 2013. The researcher used the quantitative numerical comparison of the same weeks of 2012 with 2013 to analyze the effectiveness of the qualitative method of a pastoral preaching and teaching series and its effectiveness. The researcher sought to make another determination of how pastoral leadership affected the church through preaching and teaching. The receptivity of the church as a whole would show through the numerical data.

The researcher also implemented non-religious fellowship activities where the focus group was asked to intentionally invite two people to attend two fellowship opportunities. The first activity was a church wide card game tournament that started on the evening of Friday April 12, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. and ended in what was labeled a championship round on Saturday April 13, 2013 at the same time. At the end of the card game tournament the focus group participants gave their guests a survey to quantify their experience and asked their invited guest to church. The focus group participant was also asked to call their guests once a week and chart when they called so that the discipleship

process could be consistent. The event was sponsored by the Young-Adult Ministry of the context of ministry. The second non-religious fellowship activity was a bowling tournament that started on Friday April 26, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. and ended on Saturday April 27, 2013 at the same time. The context of ministry rented four lanes for two hours each night. The Men's Ministry sponsored this outing. At the end of the bowling tournament the participants gave their invited guest another invitation to church and a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to qualitatively determine if activities outside of the church were a positive experience and to see if it would cause them to desire a church that placed fellowship as a priority as a home place of worship. The questionnaire also was designed to determine if pastoral presence had a positive response from the visiting guest. Finally the questionnaire was used to analyze their quantified survey. By design, the researcher who serves as pastor of the context of ministry was intentionally absent one night for each event.

Whoever the focus group participant invited was ascribed and numbered to that person. The guests were observed numerically and this quantitative data was collected. The guests were also being observed to see if any of them would join the context of ministry by conversion or Christian experience (quantitative). This observation also helped in suggesting if the participant personality types had anything to do with how effective the specific participant was in discipleship ministry (qualitative).

Instrumentation

For this study, the instruments were used to accomplish the main goals of the study. The main goals of the study was to first determine if certain personality types and

characteristics have any bearing on how effective one can be in discipleship ministry. Next, the researcher wanted to determine if active pastoral leadership and visibility in the discipleship process was instrumental in making the church attractive. Finally the researcher wanted to determine if the overall project would have a positive influence on the context of ministry as a whole.

The researcher used a combination of sermons, bible study series, a training manual, personality profile assessment, surveys and a questionnaire as instruments to complete this project. The researchers used surveys as quantitative instruments of measurement. A pre and post survey was given to the focus group and a survey was also given to the external guest invited by participants in the focus group from within the context of ministry. The survey was given to the focus group to see where they were in regards to their personal feelings about what they do personally in Christian discipleship. The survey was administered again to see if there was any growth in how the participants felt about their personal efforts in Christian discipleship. The focus group from within the context of ministry also was given a personality profile assessment to measure the quantitative personal feelings against their qualitative personality to type. The assessment used was the DiSC personality profile assessment. From this, the researcher was able to analyze and make assumptions about what the mixed method sequentially suggested.

A survey was also given to the external guest from outside of the context of ministry to quantify how they felt about the discipleship experience. The guests were also given a qualitative questionnaire to compare against the survey that they were previously given. The researcher used these mechanisms to get a strong analysis of the discipleship experience that the guests had with the focus group participant that invited them to the

non-religious fellowship events and worship service. The surveys were structured in a way that respondents were able to answer easily. Therefore, the surveys were structured using the Likert design with a five-point response scale. A Likert-type scale is a rating scale that requires the subject to indicate his or her degree of agreement or disagreement to a statement. In this type of survey, the respondents were given five choices of response which were very definite, fairly sure, think so, not sure, and no. The aforementioned options served as the quantification of the participant agreement or disagreement on each question item.

The researcher used different instruments of research in hopes of arriving at the hypothesis. The process of using different methods to arrive at the same answer is called triangulation. After the collection of data was complete the researcher recorded the information, wrote down all observations made, and recognized consistent themes within the context of ministry to address the research problem. The researcher was confident that the findings of the project were reliable and therefore useful to improve the issue of little to no discipleship within the context of ministry.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Paramount to this project, “Building Relationships through Friendly Fellowship for Effective Discipleship: Pastor as Pacesetter in Creating an Attractive Church,” was to remain focused on using research methods strong enough to prove or disprove the hypothesis that was birthed from the research problem. The hypothesis for this project was, if the local church identifies people who are best suited for discipleship ministry through their personality type, integrates biblical preaching and teaching on the importance of building relationships combined with enjoyable activities that can induce the intentional development of personal friendships, then discipleship will be effective enough to foster an environment that will resolve the issues of stalled growth because of retention problems in the church due to lack of connectivity. The hypothesis was developed by the researcher because he noticed that the ministries of the context of ministry were focused on raising money to perform their projected plans for each calendar year. The ministries seemed to negate to plan fellowship activities that would enable the people to build relationships with other members outside of their respective ministries.

Although the context of ministry plans excellent ministry projects to cater to the needs of the community; it lacks the connectivity that would attract people to the church

or entice people to remain active members of the local congregation. Therefore, the researcher felt the need to wonder if he had failed to get to know the members of the church on a personal level to see if he knew not only what the spiritual gifts of the people were, but also if the people were comfortable in performing their ministry duties within their own personality types. The researcher believes that God gives people their own particular personalities for a purpose. And it is every leader's duty to ensure that the people they lead are in a position to be most effective for the total well-being of the context of ministry. If a leader will engage those that they lead by developing their gifts within their personality then each person that they lead will be productive. Dr. Ronald Williams says, "Some ministry organizations suffer from a lack of concern for personal productivity. The lack of productivity usually occurs when people are left to fit their personalities into generic formulas."¹ The researcher agrees with the aforementioned statement. The project attempted to reveal that ministries, especially the ministry of discipleship, can only be productive when the right personality types fit within the generic formulas of each specific ministry.

In order to perform this project the researcher began by taking a random sampling of ten members of the context of ministry to serve as a potential focus group. A random sampling is defined as a sample in which every element in a population has an equal chance of being selected. The random sampling was taken by retrieving a numbered list of the entire membership of the context of ministry, and then the researcher used the software program *Stata* in order to choose ten people equally by chance. The ten people chosen for the project were contacted by the minister of assimilation of the context of

¹ Ronald Williams, *Serving God with Style* (Bethesda: The Alban Institute, 2002). 21.

ministry and asked to assist the pastor in developing a new discipleship ministry on February 5, 2013. The minister of assimilation informed the random selection of people that they would begin training for the new ministry on March 3, 2013. The minister of assimilation told the random selection of people that they would sign a waiver to ensure their privacy because they were going to be given a personality profile (see Appendix A). They were assured that nothing discussed in our sessions would be privileged information and that their names would not be used in any information recorded throughout this process by the pastor. The last thing they were informed on was the training sessions would be ten lessons covered in five weeks at the Sunday School hour on Sunday mornings in the church fellowship hall. Every person from the random selection agreed to assist the pastor with this new ministry development process.

Collection of Data

Sunday morning, March 3, 2013 the focus group class convened at 10:00 a.m. and all ten people were present. The researcher started collecting data on the focus group. The group was given a participant packet that consisted of a waiver to be signed by the participant and the researcher to assure their privacy. The packet also contained the DiSC Personality Profile, the “Becoming a Contagious Christian” workbook for training, and a discipleship pre-survey (see Appendix A).

The researcher had the Nehemiah Training Group from Charlotte, NC to distribute and grade the DiSC Personality Profile to begin the collection of data on the focus group. DiSC is a personal assessment tool used to improve work productivity, teamwork and communication. DiSC is non-judgmental and helps people discuss their

behavioral differences. If you participate in a DiSC program, you will be asked to complete a series of questions that produce a detailed report about your personality and behavior. Also when a group of people know what one their DiSC grade is, it enables them to work together in a more productive fashion because they understand one another better and can appreciate each other more. Each letter of the acronym DiSC represents a specific personality description that is given to the participant after their assessment is graded. The D stands for dominance. People with the D style place an emphasis on shaping the environment by overcoming opposition to accomplish results. When communicating with the D style individuals, give them the bottom line, be brief, focus your discussion narrowly, avoid making generalizations, refrain from repeating yourself, and focus on solutions rather than problems.

The “i” is for influence. People with the “i” style place an emphasis on shaping the environment by influencing or persuading others. These types of people are motivated by social recognition, group activities, and relationships. They also prioritize taking action, collaboration, and expressing enthusiasm about what needs to be done in their social environments. When communicating with the “i” style individual, share your experiences, allow the “i” style person time to ask questions and talk themselves, focus on the positives, avoid overloading them with details, and do not interrupt them.

The S is for steadiness. People with the S style place an emphasis on cooperating with others within existing circumstances to carry out the task. A person with an S Style is motivated by cooperation, opportunities to help, and sincere appreciation. They are usually very easy to get along with, but they are not very accepting of change. When communicating with the S Style individuals, be personal and amiable, express your

interest in them and what you expect from them, take time to provide clarification, be polite, and avoid being confrontational, overly aggressive or rude.

And the C is for conscientiousness. People with the C style place an emphasis on working conscientiously within existing circumstances to ensure quality and accuracy. A person with a C style is motivated by opportunities to gain knowledge, showing their expertise, maintaining stability and quality work. These individuals are not very accepting of change also. When communicating with the C style individual, focus on facts and details; minimize “pep talk” or emotional language; be patient, persistent and diplomatic.

Next, the researcher gave the focus group a pre-survey on discipleship. The survey was designed to assess where each individual saw themselves as a follower of Jesus Christ. The scoring ranged from 0-100 and represented the following chart:

Score	C
0 – 24	Your following is very weak at present. Perhaps you are a new Christian or have not yet really started. Are you prepared to clearly answer Jesus’ call and become His disciple?
25 – 49	You have made a beginning in some areas, but your following is still loose and distant. Jesus is calling you to follow Him more closely.
50 – 74	You have made some good progress as a follower of Jesus. But don’t become a half-hearted follower. There is much more growing for you in some important areas of discipleship.
Score	C
75 – 100	You are well on the way as a follower of Jesus, but keep on going! There are still important steps ahead for you.

At the end of the twelve week project, the same survey was given again in order to measure the growth of the desire to do discipleship ministry and/or the lack thereof. The scores of each individual will be given later in this chapter.

After collecting data on the focus group the researcher also collected data on the guest that the focus group was assigned to invite to the friendly non-church fellowships. The first fellowship was a card playing tournament sponsored by the young adult ministry. The second fellowship was a bowling tournament sponsored by the men's ministry. The quantitative data taken on the invited guest was a measurable Likert scale survey that was taken at the beginning of the first event. The qualitative data was a questionnaire to follow up the survey so that the suggestions interpreted by the questionnaire could lend more strength to the survey. The questionnaire was given at the end of the bowling tournament.

The last collection of data was measured through the worship experience. The researcher began the project with a four part preaching series for Sunday mornings and a four part Bible study series for Wednesday night. The idea was to saturate the context of ministry with the idea of discipleship and fellowship while also keeping the theme of discipleship ministry in front of the focus group. The researcher performed a comparative quantitative measurement of how many visits, baptisms, and membership commitments the context of ministry received between the first Sunday of March to the third Sunday of May in 2012 and the same timeframe in 2013.

Analysis of Data

In order to analyze the data that was collected the researcher began by coding each participant in the focus group to ensure privacy by labeling each participant FG-1 to FG-10. The researcher also labeled each invited guest of the focus group members. Every participant in the focus group was instructed to invite two people they knew personally, not actively attending a church to both of the friendly fellowship activities. They were told that the goal was to build on the previous relationship they had with the people they were going to invite. They were also asked to invited their guest to church, but only after the first fun fellowship outing. The researcher stressed connectivity in order to grow and build churches with people. The five week training sessions before the fellowship events were helpful in teaching about the benefits of connectivity in the church. The researcher chose Bill Hybel and his “Becoming a Contagious Christian” workbook as the training manual (see Appendix A). The focus group was given two weeks to identify the people they want to participate in the development of this new discipleship ministry. On March 17, 2013 when the focus group came back with the two people they obtained a commitment to participate the invited guest were labeled with each person of the focus group with a lowercase a and b. For example, FG-1 and their invited guest was labeled FG-1a and FG-1b.

After coding a description of focus group member was charted along with their grade from their personality assessment. The chart below indicates that one out of ten from the random sampling has the D personality type. As previously mentioned these are your dominant personalities. They are willing to get the job done and overcome anything in their environments to achieve success. One out of ten participants possess the “i”

personality type. FG-2 is the kind of person who desires influence. They are typically enthusiastic and friendly people. They also like getting the job done, but they are not fixated on the fastest way to get results. They usually have patience. Five out of ten participants are S type personalities. They are your steady and consistent type of people. They are friendly, but they abhor change and they love to be validated. And three out of ten participants are the C type personalities. These types like working alone because they believe in quality work. They also are not very accepting to change. Therefore, since a random sampling is potentially indicative of the entire population, there is a possibility that eighty percent of the population at the context of ministry is not very acceptable of change.

Participant	Age	Sex	DiSC
FG-1	62	M	D
FG-2	54	M	S
FG-3	33	F	i
FG-4	28	F	S
FG-5	25	M	S
FG-6	23	F	C
FG-7	52	F	C
FG-8	61	F	S
FG-9	44	M	C
FG-10	59	F	S

The focus group also took the pre-survey on discipleship given by the researcher. After the results were collected the researcher charted the scores. One can observe the chart below:

Participant	Pre-Survey Score
FG-1	38
FG-2	24
FG-3	59
FG-4	30
FG-5	36
FG-6	22
FG-7	19
FG-8	31
FG-9	23
FG-10	32

In the previous chart, describing where each one would see themselves in discipleship as a follower of Christ, one can detect how the quantitative pre-survey gives strength to the qualitative personality assessment. Noticeably the chart displays how FG-3 the enthusiastic “i” personality saw herself more excited than the others while FG-1, the D personality, who is concerned with getting the job done also scored higher than everybody else besides FG-3. The chart also detects, with the exception of FG-2 that the friendly S group scored higher than the more introverted C group. The aforementioned trend remained steady even in the post-survey also in the chart below:

Participant	Post-Survey Score
FG-1	57
FG-2	30
FG-3	81
FG-4	30
FG-5	40
FG-6	24
FG-7	18
FG-8	32
FG-9	32
FG-10	36

The above chart suggests that only FG-1 the D personality and FG-3 the “i” personalities were comfortable with change. They scored drastically higher on their post-survey than they did on their pre-survey. The S group and C group roughly hovered around the same score. The pre and post survey scores suggest two things about personalities within a church and its effect on discipleship ministry. The first thing the research suggests is that people who do not like change are less likely to be effective in discipleship ministry. The idea of the church activities drawing a crowd that is different than what they are used to can possibly cause this group some discomfort. But secondly, those who are hard workers, enthusiastic, and comfortable with change can see the value in discipleship ministries and fellowship activities. The research suggests they will thrive in talking to people and leading people; and as a result can be effective in making disciples for the building of the local church.

The researcher also took to take notes on the invited guests. On April 12, 2013 the researcher held the first friendly fellowship at the home of a member of the young adult ministry. The event was a card tournament. Of the twenty invited guest twelve were present. FG-7 and FG-9 had guests who were no shows and FG-2, FG-5, FG-6, and FG-8 all had one no show per participant and one guest that was present. The tournament was held on two nights ending on April 13, 2013. The researcher intentionally missed the first night and appeared the second night. After the tournament was over the researcher personally approached each guest and asked them to take a quick survey. All of the guests that came agreed to take the survey. On the Likert scale from one to five, the survey had two categories of questions. The first category measure how they felt about a pastor being present and active in the life of the entire church. The second category was designed to see if they believed that spiritual growth depended on how well they would feel connected to a church. The researcher charted the responses and took a mean to quantitatively measure how they felt. The chart below suggests that people who are not active in a church like see a pastor as a pacesetter in the life of the church. The chart also shows that the guests feel that connectivity to the people of the church helps with personal spiritual growth. The survey was done on the Likert scale with five as the highest score meaning strongly agree, four meaning agree, three meaning neutral, two meaning disagree, and one meaning strongly disagree.

Pastoral Presence Score Average	Spiritual Growth Score Average
4.2	4.4

On Friday April 26, the men's ministry sponsored a bowling tournament. The tournament ended on Saturday April 27, 2013. The bowling tournament was poorly attended. Six of the guests were present and they were FG-1a and b, FG-3a and b, and FG-10a and b. The researcher missed the first night of the tournament and was present on the second night of the tournament. On the last night of the event the researcher gave the six guest and interview questionnaire. The research sat the six guests in a group, asked the questions and had the guests to record their response. The interview was a qualitative method to strengthen the survey. The interview suggested that they notice the missed presence of the pastor. They also felt really good that someone invited them to have fun fellowship before inviting them to church. And they agreed that they would consider being a part of the context of ministry in the future.

The last measurement of the comparative quantitative number of visitors, baptisms and Christian experience to join the context of ministry between the twelve weeks March and May of 2012 and March and May of 2013. The researcher started the first four weeks of the project preaching a four part series on discipleship and on Wednesday nights a Bible study series was taught on discipleship. There was a large increase between 2012 and 2013 in visitations, baptisms, and memberships. See the chart below:

Year	Visitations	Baptisms	New Memberships
2012	13	0	3
2013	49	11	28

Outcome

The outcome of the project was affirmative to the hypothesis. The overall project ignited church growth. The research suggested that personalities play a major role in ministry effectiveness. The focus group had three effective members in FG-1, FG-3, and FG-10. FG1a visited the church. FG1b visited and joined the church. FG3a visited and joined the church. FG-3b visited, was baptized, and joined the church. FG-10 showed how an S type personality can allow the friendliness in them to play a role in being effective in discipleship ministry. FG-10a visited and joined the church. Therefore when the church identifies the right personalities, train those people, and have fun filled events churches can grow. Churches can also have high retention when people feel connectivity to the church through built relationships. The researcher feels that this project can be a model for discipleship ministries because in addition to spiritual gift assessments, personality assessments can help in placing people in the right ministry that fits the person God made the to be.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

The church is the place where people from all walks of life come together on a weekly basis to engage in their personal expressions of worship. In the African-American church, many individuals come with their best garments and their best faces to hide the pain they deal with in life. The researcher can attest to living this kind of life. The researcher has been a part of the African-American church tradition all of his life. He is the product of a dysfunctional family and for most of his life had to deal with the struggle to start and maintain successful relationships.

When the researcher reflects over his life he wonders how many people bring the struggle of building relationships into the sanctuary. He now looks at the faces before him on Sunday mornings knowing that there are many who sit under the sounds of his voice surrounded by a plethora of people but are all alone. The book of Hebrews said, “And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”¹ Many people take this scripture to mean that we should go to church. However, the researcher believes that one can go to church and still neglect to motivate others, meet together, and encourage people.

¹ Hebrews 10:24-25 (NRSV).

The researcher is reminded of seeing a former member of his church in the mall. The researcher and his former member engaged in small talk and laughter. Finally, the researcher got the boldness to ask, “Why did you leave the fellowship?” The former member responded by saying, “I felt like I was all alone when I would come to church.” She furthered her claim by saying, “I did not feel like I was making any friends. I really enjoyed the “word” but I did not enjoy feeling like I was on an island by myself.

As the researcher reflects over this project he can see that the hypothesis was accomplished. He identified what types of personalities can be successful in the constructs of a successful discipleship ministry. The research suggested that people are more apt to believe in the local ministry of the church if people seem to genuinely want to be their friends first. “Jesus followers need to simply be friends with those outside the church.”² The research also put forward that people like to have fun and they do not desire to lay down their fun loving nature just to be a part of the church. The researcher learned that being productive by being place in the right ministry for your gifts and personalities, making friends, having a good time with friends, and building relationships are more important than being able to preach a great word.

Three out of ten people in the focus group were successful in adding to the church by building relationships with those that they reached out to. They called their selected guests to just see how they were doing without bringing up church. They did not focus on differences; they focused on similarities to build on and make the connection stronger that they were before. When FG-3b was asked why they connected with the context of ministry she said, “FG-3 never sounded judgmental, political, or holier than thou.” FG-

² David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 232.

10a was asked the same thing and said, “I never knew that FG-10 was the kind of church goer who had fun. I figured if she could do it, then I could get back into the church too.” Although, the numbers of the focus group look unsuccessful in comparison to what happened in terms of church growth during the twelve week project, the researcher argues that the three individuals who help to add to the church were very successful. The focus group only accounted for four out of twenty-eight new memberships and one out of eleven baptisms. But the researcher believes the hypothesis is proven because they were productive and to date those members are still a part of the fellowship. So, the retention issues, previously had, are currently being worked out.

However, the researcher also acknowledges his failures in the project as well. The church at large seeming responded to the project through preaching and teaching more than the focus group that was trained and guided on how to perform intimate discipleship.

As the researcher looked back at his sermons over the last eight years he realized that he had never preached a discipleship series or taught a discipleship Bible Study. The context of ministry responded well to this teaching and preaching. So, if the researcher could do the process over again he would have implemented a project on discipleship that tested and measure the nuances of intentional preaching. For this particular context of ministry the researcher believes that he should have done a project that “created a culture for discipleship”³ and did platform discipleship. Tom Cocklereece says, “The goal of platform or presentation discipleship is to motivate as many as possible in the audience to

³ Tom Cocklereece, *Simple Discipleship* (St. Charles: Churchsmart Resources, 2009), 66.

buy-in to the communicated vision and message.”⁴ The researcher still believes in intimate discipleship, but when the church has never put an emphasis on discipleship before, the goal is to create the culture. And the best way for a leader to create a culture is by utilizing his or her platform.

The researcher has been changed by this project. The researcher used to think that the pastoral ministry was only about preaching, teaching, casting vision, and overseeing ministry. But now the researcher can see how pastoral ministry is very tedious work. The pastoral ministry is about creating ways to get to know the people one cares for, while placing them in ministries that best suit who they are as a person. The researcher did not get to obtain his goal of starting a discipleship ministry. But he did start what he calls the encouragers ministry. The encouragers ministry cares for new converts, but they also have an administrative roll. They create a spread sheet that keeps a detailed profile on the members of the church. The profile includes the results of a spiritual gifts assessment and a personality assessment. They also call members who have been absent for two Sundays in a row to see how they are doing. They also are in the process of getting the entire church tested on the DiSC personality assessment. In the near future they will set up workshops to teach people how to work with each other and understand the personality of people.

Eric feels that he should do further research theologically in the subdivision of ecclesiology. He wants to study how a local church’s personalities and spiritual gifts as a whole can be more effective in the current culture. The researcher also desires to continue perfecting his ideology of Pastoral Theology as God continues to use the church as God’s

⁴ Ibid., 91.

vehicle to show God's love and distribute God's word to the world. This project can be replicated at the discretion of church leaders as they are led by the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT PACKET

Privacy Agreement

As previously informed, you will be participating in helping Manasseh Baptist Church of Greensboro, NC start a new discipleship ministry. The start of this ministry will entail a personality assessment profile, training sessions, and surveys in order to properly chart our progress.

Manasseh Baptist Church will not disclose any data collected or analyzed with your personal information attached. All names, ages, and scores will be held with the utmost of confidentiality. Your information will be coded and no one will be able to recognize you personally as a result of this process which you are about to enter. Please sign below if you agree with these terms.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

DiSC Personality Profile

In my work environment, it is most important to me...	
☐	To help co-workers and to be in a peaceful environment.
☐	To feel that my co-workers admire me and to be free from rigid rules.
☐	To know exactly what is expected of me and to finish one task before moving to another.
☐	To get things done and to see results.

In my work environment, it is least important to me...	
☐	To help co-workers and to be in a peaceful environment.
☐	To feel that my co-workers admire me and to be free from rigid rules.
☐	To know exactly what is expected of me and to finish one task before moving to another.
☐	To get things done and to see results.

When someone offers an opinion or conclusion and I disagree, I am most likely to...	
☐	Tell them that I disagree.
☐	Say something humorous.
☐	Ask for more information.
☐	Nod and say nothing.

When someone offers an opinion or conclusion and I disagree, I am least likely to...

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| ☐ | Tell them that I disagree. |
| ☐ | Say something humorous. |
| ☐ | Ask for more information. |
| ☐ | Nod and say nothing. |

When I am working on a team and we encounter a difficulty of some kind, I am most likely to say...

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| ☐ | Lighten up! Just go with the flow! |
| ☐ | Let's make a decision! |
| ☐ | How do you feel? I'd like to make sure that everyone is comfortable. |
| ☐ | Let's consider this more carefully? Do we have all of the data we need? |

When I am working on a team and we encounter a difficulty of some kind, I am least likely to say...

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| ☐ | Lighten up! Just go with the flow! |
| ☐ | Let's make a decision! |
| ☐ | How do you feel? I'd like to make sure that everyone is comfortable. |
| ☐ | Let's consider this more carefully? Do we have all of the data we need? |

My attitude towards detail work—like research and data analysis—is most often...	
☐	Great. I enjoy research and analysis.
☐	If it will get better and faster results, I'll do it.
☐	If it will make others think more highly of me, I'll do it.
☐	If it will help other people or make things easier, I'll do it.

My attitude towards detail work—like research and data analysis—is least often...	
☐	Great. I enjoy research and analysis.
☐	If it will get better and faster results, I'll do it.
☐	If it will make others think more highly of me, I'll do it.
☐	If it will help other people or make things easier, I'll do it.

When I am at an event with many people I have not yet met present, I am most likely to...	
☐	Find a small group of people with whom I am already comfortable and speak with them in quiet conversation.
☐	Seek a good vantage point to observe the event and sit quietly unless someone speaks to me.
☐	Meet and talk with as many people as possible before the event is over.
☐	Go to the people I need to speak with to fulfill my purpose for attending.

When I am at an event with many people I have not yet met present, I am least likely to...	
☐	Find a small group of people with whom I am already comfortable and speak with them in quiet conversation.
☐	Seek a good vantage point to observe the event and sit quietly unless someone speaks to me.
☐	Meet and talk with as many people as possible before the event is over.
☐	Go to the people I need to speak with to fulfill my purpose for attending.

The way I see myself most is...	
☐	Doing, driving, and accomplishing.
☐	Patient, kind, and helpful.
☐	Logical, factual, and correct.
☐	Friendly, fun, and persuasive.

The way I see myself least is...	
☐	Doing, driving, and accomplishing.
☐	Patient, kind, and helpful.
☐	Logical, factual, and correct.
☐	Friendly, fun, and persuasive.

When I hear about a coming change, I am most likely to think...	
☐	How does it affect me?
☐	Is there a good reason behind it?
☐	What will it do to results and speed?
☐	How does it affect everyone involved?

When I hear about a coming change, I am least likely to think...	
☐	How does it affect me?
☐	Is there a good reason behind it?
☐	What will it do to results and speed?
☐	How does it affect everyone involved?

The type of work activities that I enjoy the most involve...	
☐	Fast-paced, rapidly changing tasks that create progress.
☐	Working alone and focusing on the task at hand to create excellence.
☐	Comfortable and predictable tasks that support the team.
☐	Interacting with many people to create new ideas and energy.

The type of work activities that I enjoy the least involve...

- ☐ Fast-paced, rapidly changing tasks that create progress.
- ☐ Working alone and focusing on the task at hand to create excellence.
- ☐ Comfortable and predictable tasks that support the team.
- ☐ Interacting with many people to create new ideas and energy.

When I receive a phone call, I am most interested in...

- ☐ Talking with the person who called.
- ☐ What they want me to do.
- ☐ Why they called me.
- ☐ How I can help.

When I receive a phone call, I am least interested in...

- ☐ Talking with the person who called.
- ☐ What they want me to do.
- ☐ Why they called me.
- ☐ How I can help.

The thing someone could say that would have the most positive impact on me is...

☐	I really appreciate you.
☐	You are fantastic!
☐	You get a lot done.
☐	You do excellent work.

The thing someone could say that would have the least positive impact on me is...	
☐	I really appreciate you.
☐	You are fantastic!
☐	You get a lot done.
☐	You do excellent work.

The projects or tasks that I enjoy the most allow me to...	
☐	Collect and evaluate information to build plans or systems.
☐	Achieve big results and overcome a challenge.
☐	Do what I already know how to do at my own pace.
☐	Work with many different people on a wide range of tasks to keep things interesting.

The projects or tasks that I enjoy the least require me to...	
---	--

☐	Collect and evaluate information to build plans or systems.
☐	Achieve big results and overcome a challenge.
☐	Do what I already know how to do at my own pace.
☐	Work with many different people on a wide range of tasks to keep things interesting.

Lesson 1

Read Chapter One, “Why Become a Contagious Christian?”

Question to mull over:

- What picture comes to mind when you hear the word “evangelism”?
 - What do you have to believe about your own beliefs, in order to witness to anybody?
 - Is it really OK to believe that one belief is better than another (vs. postmodernism)?
1. The book suggests that all Christians really long in their hearts to be “contagious Christians.” Do you agree with that? Or would most of us prefer to let the religious “professionals” handle evangelism?
 2. What is the “Anthropic Principle”?
 - A. What does that say about God?
 - B. What does imply about how we should feel about people?
 3. There is a whole “Customer Service” revolution that says that everything depends on treating the customer right so they will keep coming back, and spread the word about your product.
 - What does the Customer Service revolution suggest about evangelism?
 4. Look at the 3 stories of Luke 15 (page 18, 22, & 23).
 - A. What do these 3 “lost” stories tell us about God?
 - B. If we are people after God’s own heart, then how should we feel?

Lesson 1, cont.

5. If everybody is saved by living up to the light that they have received, why go as missionaries to people and give them more light, so now they have more light they have to live up to?

A. More likely that they will _____.

B. Their lives will be _____.

6. Why do you think God chose to use us in spreading the Good News, rather than just doing it all Himself?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

7. In Luke 15 there was always a “party” when something that was lost was found. What does that tell us about what happens in heaven when someone steps over the line?

Which means that every act of witness brings joy to the heart of God!

Reflection: What has kept you from sharing more of what is so important to you, with others?

Lesson 2

Read Chapter Two, “The Rewards of Contagious Christianity”

The Bible asks us to “count the cost” of switching sides in our beliefs. And you are no doubt counting the cost of how much you want to commit to being a truly contagious Christian!

Possible Benefits :

1. A _____. Some people live life “thin”—casual conversation, no risks, safe, small. Others choose to live “thick.”
2. P _____. There’s something special about getting involved with God, seeing what God might do. *Experiencing God* by Henry Blackaby talks about how God is always working (John 5), and is always inviting us to join Him in what He is doing. It gives you purpose and meaning and fulfillment.
3. F _____. Everybody wants to do something that really matters, will last beyond themselves, not waste the one life we get to live, do something to change the world, make a difference.
4. S _____ G _____. You can go through the motions of living a religious life, or you can come off the sidelines, get into the arena, and it will force you to grow spiritually, get involved in the spiritual disciplines of studying the Bible, prayer, being filled with the Spirit. It’s a rich responsibility to be asked to represent God’s Name (3rd comm.).
5. S _____ C _____. Getting involved in passing on your beliefs makes you sort out what you yourself really believe, rather than just unthinkingly holding on to whatever your family passed on to you or reflecting the dominant culture around you. It clarifies things for you, your own beliefs become more internalized, “owned,” as you hammer out your own convictions. And it gives you the confidence that you can people’s questions, because you have wrestled it out yourself.

Lesson 2, cont.

6. E_____ I_____. You will be setting aside treasure in heaven!

7. H_____

Possible Costs

1. T_____, E_____

2. R_____ S_____. It will take some time to do some of the reading and study to be ready to give an answer for what you believe.

3. M_____

4. R_____ of E_____

5. R_____. But Jesus says if they reject the message, not rejecting you—rejecting Him.

6. C_____ Life.

So—it is worth it?!

Lesson 3

Read Chapter 3, “A Formula for Impacting Your World”

Discussion: If you could be president for a day, what 3 changes would you make?

If you inherited \$10 million, and had to spend \$9 million of it on others, what would you do?

What’s the magic formula for impacting your world? _____

MI: M _____ I _____

Read the 3 Great “Mission” Texts: Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:19; Matt. 28:18-20

- What risk did God take in using people?
- What might need to be rearranged in order to have “maximum impact”? (41:1)

Salt: List the 3 options for what “salt” mean, as “salt of the earth”?

1. T _____. What makes you thirsty for God? Ps. 46:1-2. What can we do to make others feel thirsty? What do we usually “think” we’re thirsty for, when really thirsty for God?

2. S _____. Who do you know that makes you “want” to be a Christian? In general, who would be more “alive” around you—Christians, or non-Christians?

3. P _____.

Lesson 3, cont.

CP: C _____ P _____.

Becky Pippert—Salt shaker that still has the salt in it is just a table ornament! So we have to be out in the real world, close enough for people to “see” and feel the difference God is making in our lives.

- How P _____ are you, on a scale of 1-5? How can you increase your potency? What does it mean, close proximity? Physically? Culturally? Socially? Emotionally?

CC: C _____ C _____

Light: Matt. 5:14; 2 Cor. 4:6.

- What is the “Light”?
- What is the “darkness” of 2 Cor. 4:3-6?
- Debby Boone sang, “You Light Up My Life”—in what way does Jesus light up someone’s life? John 9; John 1:18; 17:2-5. Theologically? Emotionally? Socially?
- Is it enough to just live powerful Christian lives, and live in close proximity to people in the real world—or do we have to have this CC? Polio ward, one finds a doctor who has a cure, goes back, does jumping jacks, walks out. What’s missing?!

Review: Formula: _____

Lesson 3, cont.

Next Step: What are you going to do this week to increase your:

1. High Potency:
2. Close Proximity:
3. Clear Communication:

Go out and start having Maximum Impact!

Reflection: How good is your church at giving people an “Amnesty Week”?

Lesson 4

Read Chapter 4, "The Attractiveness of Authenticity"

1. Quote: "Christians need to *be* good news before they can *share* good news." (54:3)
Who is the best "good news" person you know, right now?

Gandhi said if Christians wanted him to convert to Christianity Christians needed to act more like Christ. What would he say if he were in your town? Church? Your family?!

2. Some studies show that on certain sins, Christians are as bad as non-Christians: Divorce, racism, truthfulness. Why doesn't Christianity make more of a difference? Why don't we "walk the talk"?

3. "Authentic Identity"--Why do we tend to wear masks with each other? Why are non-Christians always afraid that if they "commit" they will be forced into "some one-size-fits-all" mode? Where do they get that?

4. Real—What do people want when they say, "Get real"?

Read Chapter 5, "The Pull of Compassion"

Read: The Rabbi's Gift, <http://www.community4me.com/rabbisgift.html>

1. What is your "Compassion Quotient," on a scale of 1-10?

(Stone Cold)

(Mother Teresa)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Why is it so important, to be people of compassion?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

Lesson 4, cont.

3. What is the main point of the Good Samaritan story in Luke 10:25-37?

- Do good Christians have to stop for everybody?

4. Factors that can sabotage your heart:

- A. (71)_____ B. (73)_____
- C. (75)_____ D. (76) Not passing on w_____y_____h_____r_____

Reflection: Won't people sense that the only reason you are caring about them is to win them? How big is your heart—right now? What can you do to enlarge your heart, this week?

Read Chapter 6, "The Strength of Sacrifice"

1. What does he mean, "Sacrifices move people"? (81:5)

Why is "sacrifice" the strongest contagious characteristic? (83:5)

2. What sacrifices move people?

- A. Sacrifice your _____ (84:1)
- B. Sacrifice of r_____ (87:3)
- C. Sacrifice of a _____ (89:3)

Lesson 5

Read Chapter 7, “Strategic Opportunities in Relationships”

DISCUSSION: The old movie and booklet *Gospel Blimp* told about a group that wanted to evangelize their town, and so bought a used blimp that could drag a sign that said, “Jesus saves”, broadcast sermons over a loudspeaker, and drop leaflets on the neighborhoods! Why has the Church often put most of its efforts and money into relatively impersonal methods? What should we be doing differently? Can we use some sort of combination of the personal and impersonal?

Every piece of research says that between 75 and 80% of all the people converted into a church, had their first step towards God and the Church through a personal relationship—not media, pastor, literature.

1. Just Walk Across the Room—Sometimes you just need to do what Jesus did—Leave a Zone of Comfort, just walk across the room to someone standing alone, and introduce yourself—“I’m _____.”

2. What kind of friendships turn off seekers? _____ Friendships need to be natural, non-threatening, that don’t make people feel like a target or a project.

3. What are the *risks* in getting thoroughly involved in our culture in order to reach people?

A. What about 2 Cor. 6:17; 1 John 2:15-17

B. How far should we go in being like Paul and adjusting to our culture (1 Cor. 9:22)? Music in the church? Media & entertainment? Culture we stay “up” on? Parties we can go to on Sabbath? Friends we hang out with?

C. Is possible to be “in the world but not of the world” (John 17:14-18; 101:11)?

D. What about Rev. 2:12-13, where people were living where Satan had his throne, yet were faithful? Do we need to move out of the cities, and flee to the hills? Should we send our children to isolated schools to keep them pure? Or put them into public schools in order to be “salt of the earth”?

Lesson 5, cont.

4. What are the best ways to build bridges over to people? (Jacobsen, Bridges 101)

Read Chapter Eight, “Rubbing Shoulders with Irreligious People”

1. What was the best party last year? Who was the group? What was the event?
2. How many parties can you think of in the Bible? Is there a party theme in the Bible?
The Sabbath is to be a delight. Could we make it more like a party? Worship services?

3. Matthew Party (Luke 5:29–What was Matthew trying to do?

What 2 groups was he trying to mix? A. _____ B. _____

4. What are the three groups you should put on your “Impact List”?

Where should you start? People you know vs. People You Don’t Know” (108:5)

Next Steps: Make a list of names in each of the 3 lists:

1. With People You Know
2. People You Used to Know
3. People You’d Like to Know

Lesson 6

Read Chapter Nine, "Finding the Approach that Fits You"

DISCUSSION: (1) What keeps people from being evangelistic? (2) What keeps people from responding? (A) We invite people to come hear how to deal with their worst problems and weaknesses, when we should invite them to learn how to maximize their strengths!

Why do we do this?! (B) We use the most frightening pictures of God (beasts, judgment, time of trouble) to market them into coming, when we should use the most Good News about God to draw them. Why do we do this?! (C) We ask people to "sell" it passionately but in ways that are the most foreign to their personality and temperament, when we should ask them to do it in the way most natural and personal to them, using our spiritual gifts and "signature strengths"! Why do we do this?! (D) And we pressure people to witness to the people they probably know the least! Why do we do this?!

Six Different Approaches:

1. Peter's _____ Approach (Matt. 16:15)

Traits: A. Convinced he was _____ (123:7)

B. C _____ B _____ R _____ (123:7)

C. U _____ (123:8, Acts 2)

D. No _____ terms (124:0)

E. Made him _____ (124:4)

2. Paul's _____ Approach (Acts 17) (Risks?)

Traits: A. "Master at _____" (125:)

B. Organized _____ (125:1)

C. Argue _____ (125:1)

D. L _____ (125:3)

Lesson 6, cont.

3. The Blind Man's _____ Approach (John 9; Mark 5:19)

Traits: A. Refuse to _____ (126:3)

B. Steered away _____ (126:3)

C. "One thing I do know: _____ (126:4)

Discussion: What if you don't have a good, dramatic, Damascus-road story?

4. Matthew's _____ Approach (Luke 5:29)

Traits: A. Building _____ (128:2)

B. Warm, _____ who enjoy _____ (128:2)

C. Take the time _____ (128:3)

5. Samaritan Woman's _____ Approach (John 4)

Traits: A. Strategically _____ (129:3) Why "strategically"?

B. Knack for _____ (129:5)

C. Constantly _____ (129:5)

What can we confidently invite people to? Implications for events, worship services?

6. Tabitha (Dorcas)' _____ Approach (Acts 9:36)

Traits: A. Loving _____ (130:1)

B. Inspired by _____ (130:2)

C. Naturally _____ (130:3)

D. Find joy _____ (130:3)

Lesson 6, cont.**Reminders:**

1. Each of us will use different styles.
2. But we will be strongest in one.
3. The church needs a team that has them all.

Lesson 7

Read Chapter Ten, "Starting Spiritual Conversations"

Discussion (1): Age-old debate—Can you “evangelize” by simply being great Christian friends, living model godly lives—or do we eventually need to use words?

What would Jesus do? Rom. 10:14-17

Discussion (2): Should we initiate conversations, or wait to be asked?

1. What are the absolutely rock-bottom, irreducible minimum personal beliefs you must have in order to start spiritual conversations? (138:4,5) What do you have to believe about God?

- Christianity and the other world religions?
- Adventism as compared with the other denominations?
- What does a car salesman have to believe? Stock broker? Doctor? PR person?
- Is it ethical to presume you believe the best of all available options? What about humility, arrogance?

2. What do you have to believe about people before you can start a spiritual conversation?

3. What are the best transitions you can think of, how to transition a conversation from secular to sacred?

4. List as many “direct” methods you can think of in starting a spiritual conversation, from the book, video, or your own experience:

“If you ever would like to know the difference between R_____ and C_____—let me know!

“How’s it going? Come on, _____.

“How’s it going, really?”

“Do you ever think or wonder about s_____ matters?”

“Ever wonder what happens when you d_____?”

Lesson 7, cont.

“Where are you going in your s_____j_____?”

Can anyone use these more direct methods, or only extreme extroverts, spiritual superstars?!

5. Indirect Methods: (Just weaving God and church into casual conversations)

“We’re going to a concert at my church—have a couple extra tickets—want to come?”

“I teach a class of kids...”

“We just got back from a mission trip....”

Nature—“What do you think about the whole creation/evolution debate?”

Music—talk about the latest music, U2, crossover music

Sports—“What do you think about....?” (Tiger Woods, other ethical issues)

Shared Struggles—“Yeah, I had my own battle with that.... (12 steps, divorce, other issues)

Holidays—“What are you doing for Christmas? Easter?”

6. Is it ethical to ask about their beliefs, hoping that they will eventually ask about your beliefs?

Next Steps:

(1) Choose a favorite “opener”: _____

(2) What would be your favorite area for starting an indirect conversation—sports? Business? Kids? Movie or book?

(3) What is the next event worth inviting someone to?

Lesson 8

Read Chapter Eleven, “Making the Message Clear”

DISCUSSION: Philip Yancey tells about a prostitute in Chicago who was down so low that she was using her 2-year-old daughter in her prostitution. Someone said, “Why don’t you go to church, see if they can help you?” “Why should I do that, only make me feel worse!”

(1) How did we get that reputation?

(2) A senior in high school asked—”How many of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs do you really have to believe in in order to be saved?”

Texts to consider in your discussion:

Acts 4:12 There is no other Name under heaven by which men may be saved;

1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has life.

John 14:6 I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

John 10:7,9 I am the Door—whoever enters through Me will be saved.

Matt. 28:19-20 Teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you

1. God has put His “Truth” in our hands, His treasure is in our earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:1-7). It is up to us to make God look good, speak what is right about God (Job 42), draw people to Christ (Jer. 31:3; John 12:32); be the fragrance of Christ to the world (2 Cor. 2:14-18). In this lesson we are looking at—What are the bare essentials, the non-negotiable bottom line core elements of the Gospel that must be clearly communicated in order for people to know God and accept Christ and receive eternal life?

2. In medieval times, when a castle or fort was under attack, they would put the women, children, crown jewels, and historic documents in the “keep”, the safest part of the castle. What should be in our “keep”? Write in your own words what you think a seeker would have to believe in, bottom line, in each of these 4 areas, in order to legitimately be considered a Christian, a follower of Christ:

Lesson 8, cont.

God and His character:

Us and our situation:

Christ, the Cross, the Atonement, and Substitution:

You—what response does a person have to make:

3. Do you think it is necessary for every church member to be able to summarize the gospel in a few sentences, or can we just invite people to church or a Bible study or show a DVD and let a professional give the actual content? (150) 1 Pet. 3:15; 2 Tim. 4:2

4. Say the Do/Done concept in 25 words or less! (155)

5. Read the Bridge Illustration, and then draw it here by memory! (156)

Lesson 8, cont.

6. If you had to choose a favorite of these five options that you would be the most comfortable in sharing quickly and naturally, which would it be?

___Do/Done

___Bridge

___Roman Road

___Baseball

___Airplane

7. (162) Testimony: This may actually be the most important page in this book!

A. Do you think everyone should be able to give a verbal testimony, even if they could never preach or give a Bible study?

B. A testimony is a story: Why is telling your story such a powerful way of sharing?

C. What are the 3 components of a compelling testimony/story?

(1) Before I had a relationship with God/Before I met Christ I used to be...

(2) How I met Christ / How I got to know God / When I turned over my life to God

(3) Since then, God has done _____ in my life. My life is different...

Best example: "I was blind, but now I can see!"

Lesson 8, cont.

D. What are some of the common pitfalls people can make in giving their personal testimony?

(1)

(2)

(3)

E. What mistake do you suppose most Adventists tend to make in telling their story?!

F. Write out your own testimony, 100 words or less(!): (Avoid cliches, religious language!)

Before:

How I met Christ:

Lesson 8, cont.

Since....

8. Next Step: Plot out who you could tell your testimony to this week. Get one friend to let you test it out on them, and then try to slip into a “real” conversation with an unchurched person!

Lesson 9

Read Chapter Twelve, “Breaking the Barriers to Belief”

1. What doubts or questions did you wrestle the hardest with before making a full commitment to God?

2. How would you answer the “stumbling block” that if you give your life to Christ, you will give up your individuality, adventure, fun, good times, the party will be over?! (107:4)

John 10:10?

Luke 15 (Prodigal Son)—two parties. Either way, you’ll be in a party! Also Daniel 5 and Matt. 25.

Choose carefully which party you want to be in.

Where do our misperceptions about God like this come from?

3. How does the way that Christians live sometimes get in the way of coming to Christ for people, like Gandhi?

4. How would you answer the question on the bottom of 109, “I know what He says He is going to do for me in *eternity*, but what can I expect *right now*, between here and heaven?” (See Matt. 19:29; John 10:10)

5. “Apologetics:” How prepared should the average Christian be to answer the hardest questions people have about these issues? How would you answer questions about these challenges, in just a few words?
 - A. How do you know God really exists?
 - B. What about Creation and evolution?

Lesson 9, cont.

- C. How can I be sure about the Resurrection?
 - D. How could a good God allow so much suffering? If He has so much power, why doesn't He use it?
 - E. How do we know that other world religions aren't basically equally valid roads to heaven?
6. Do you agree or disagree that most of the time "intellectual roadblocks" or atheism are really only excuses for not wanting to live a godly, moral life (174)?
7. Read Jer. 29:11-13 one more time. Can we really assure someone who has intellectual or other barriers to belief, that if they will just keep seeking, "You will find me, if you seek Me with all your heart"?

Reflection: Jesus said not to worry about what you would say when called upon to defend your faith. Is that literally true, that God will whisper the words to speak in that situation? Or should we prepare ahead of time?

Lesson 10

Read Chapter Thirteen, “Crossing the Line of Faith”

DISCUSSION:

- (1) Again, what was the coolest party you have ever been to? What was it celebrating? Birthday? Graduation? Wedding? Championship? Something else? What do we tend to celebrate? Beginnings, middles, or endings? Why?
- (2) When should we celebrate conversions? When people accept Christ? Get baptized? Quit smoking?

Age-old Question: Should we baptize people as soon as they accept Christ? When they accept all 28 Fundamental Beliefs? When they can quit smoking, drinking, working on Sabbath, or wearing too much jewelry? Read Matt. 25:1ff one more time: When does “The Party” begin? When do you think God begins His celebration in heaven? Read **Acts** 2:37-38.

Implications?

When do sports teams celebrate? When they get to third base?!

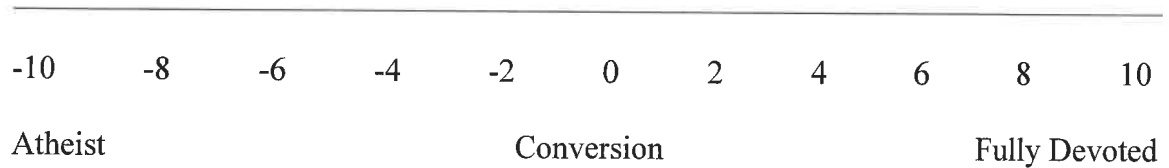
1. Matt. 28:19-20—Should the baptism come before the “teach them to obey all things” or before?

What do you think “all things” meant to Jesus? to the disciples?

2. Should each Christian sharing their faith feel disappointed if they can’t be the one to lead someone over the line to faith in Christ? Should each Christian be satisfied to just share their faith, tell their story, without trying to guide someone over the line?

Lesson 10, cont.

Receptivity Scale:



(1) Wherever you find somebody, try to move them one or two notches to the right!

(2) God may not give you the honor of taking someone over the line! You be the one to break up the hard ground from -8 to -6. But that is just as crucial to building the Kingdom as from -1 to +1!

(3) But be intentional about moving them to the right and handing them off to someone to take it further.

(4) Always be listening to the Spirit and to the signals from the individual—the Spirit may be prompting you to be the one to ask the question and hear their commitment to Christ!

(5) Or you may be the one to take newly converted people and help them become firmly established in Christ, the spiritual disciplines, and in the Church.

(6) Baseball players are coached to do something to move the runner around the bases. If they can move somebody from 2nd to 3rd they were successful. But the run doesn't count until it gets Home. Implications?

3. Having one or two reliable “lines” or approaches can really help if God is impressing you that your friend is ready make the step: “Have you thought about accepting Christ?” “Is anything keeping you from getting baptized?” Which of the other phrases on p. 184 might be the most comfortable for you?

Lesson 10, cont.

4. What Next Steps should we offer someone who has just said “YES!” to God, to help them get fully “assimilated” into the Body of Christ, to truly “Belong”?

5. Luke 15:10—If God parties in heaven, what kind of Party should we have?! Mothers get the incredible experience of bringing a new life into the world. Michael Jordan and Kobe Bryant get to make the last shot that wins a championship. How should we feel about getting to give someone eternal life PLUS the blessing of a life filled with Jesus here!

Reflection: Does the fact that so many people backslide after going forward in an evangelistic series and getting baptized mean that we should give up all forms of traditional evangelism?

Read Chapter Fourteen, “Contagious Christians and Contagious Churches”

DISCUSSION: Do we need to “study” to become a Contagious Christian, or can we just “Abide in Christ,” be filled with the Holy Spirit, and we will just “naturally” “bear much fruit”?

1. Most skills that are rewarding eventually (music, sports, courtship) have an awkward, maybe uncomfortable stage at first, and only those who stick with it get the rewards on the other end. Implications for sharing God?

2. How can churches become more contagious? How contagious is your church? What specific steps could a group of you do to make your church “white-hot” for Christ? (Rev. 3:14)

(1)

(2)

(3)

Now, who’s going to do something about this?!

Lesson 10, cont.

3. How can you be gracious to, but work around any in church who get in the way of creative new methods?
4. Hybels has a book about “holy discontent.” What makes you mad enough to get involved?!

Reflection: Should evangelism in a local church be an Event or a Process?

Read Chapter Fifteen, “Investing Your Life in People”

Discussion: Young people are enrolling all over the country in independent schools that teach for a few months witnessing and evangelism. Every December thousands go to an annual convention and hit the streets signing up people for bible studies. Thousands volunteer every year for mission trips or to be student missionaries all over the world. What have they figured out? What are they hungry for? What are those who don’t get involved missing? How can the church satisfy this hunger better?

1. Matt. 28:20—Will people involved in Matt. 28:19-20 feel closer to Jesus, “Lo I am with you always”?
2. What 3 things would most people facing the last days of their lives wish they had done differently? (217ff)
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)

Lesson 10, cont.

What will you wish you had done, in the last 30 minutes of your life? Who did people call when their plane was going down on 9-11? What will you wish had done more of when you send your kids off to college? What was the gift that Scrooge was given in his dream? The chance to change before it was too late!

Next Step: Read Derek Morris's book, *Radical Prayer*, on Luke 10:2-4 "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

God bless as you go out into the world to be a truly Contagious Christian!

Discipleship Self-Evaluation Assessment Pre and Post Survey!

This project is a self-test to see where you are now as a follower of Jesus (before starting this book). There are no right or wrong answers to this assessment. Your answer to each question is what you feel about your discipleship. It is a test to help you see where you are now, not where you think you should be, or would like to be in the future. So be as honest with yourself as you can without over-rating or under-rating yourself.

* Read each statement and put a tick in the column that you judge to be most true of you.

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1. Response to Christ's call					
* I believe Jesus is the 'Son of God,' that He died for me, rose again and there is no other way to God except through Him.					
* I have answered Christ's call to "repent and believe," and know my sins have been forgiven.					
* There is a definite time when I asked Jesus to come into my life as Saviour and Lord.					
* I have followed Jesus through the waters of baptism.					
2. Spiritual Growth					
* I set aside time each day to be alone with God in prayer, Bible reading and meditation.					
* My times of prayer include – praise, adoration, worship, thanksgiving, confession, praying for others, and for God's work.					
* I also practice speaking to God throughout the day.					
* As well as daily Bible reading, I spend at least one hour each week in serious Bible study.					
* Over the past year, I have memorized a verse of Scripture each week.					

(Cont.)

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
3. Lordship of Christ					
* I let Christ's control come over what I read, hear, watch and think about.					
* I submit my body to Christ's control in what I eat, in self-discipline and exercise, and in keeping morally pure.					
* I clearly show to those I live and work with my Christian commitment by my words, attitudes and actions.					
* I am more concerned to win God's approval in what I do than to win the approval of others.					
* The 'fruit of the Spirit' (<i>love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control</i>) is clearly seen in my life.					
4. Fellowship					
* I meet at least weekly with other Christians for all of the following – worship, teaching, ministry, prayer, fellowship.					
* I am sharing and relating each week in a close way with a small group of Christians for mutual encouragement, up-building and support.					
* As far as it depends on me I try to live in harmony and unity with other Christians, demonstrating the qualities of love, acceptance and forgiveness.					
5. Service					
* I take an active part in the life and ministries of my church.					
* I am using the spiritual gift(s) God has given me to build up others.					

(Cont.)

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
5. Service (cont.)					
* I seek each week to encourage, help, or perform a kind deed to help other Christians.					
* I am regularly giving at least one tenth of my income towards God's work.					
6. Witness					
* I am praying each week for the conversion of at least one non-Christian by name.					
* I have tried to build friendship and reach out to at least one non-Christian person over the last month.					
* I have been able to share my faith with a non-Christian in some way over the past month.					
* I clearly show to those I live and work with my Christian commitment by my words, attitudes and actions.					
* Over the past month I have helped to influence, encourage, disciple or train at least one other person to follow Jesus more fully.					
TOTAL ticks (for each column on the last page and this page)					
MULTIPLY each column total	X4	X3	X2	X1	X0
by:-					0
NEW TOTALS:					



YOUR FINAL SCORE (add new totals of columns 1 to 4)

Score	Comments
0 – 24	Your following is very weak at present. Perhaps you are a new Christian or have not yet really started. Are you prepared to clearly answer Jesus' call and become His disciple?
25 – 49	You have made a beginning in some areas, but your following is still loose and distant. Jesus is calling you to follow Him more closely.
50 – 74	You have made some good progress as a follower of Jesus. But don't become a half-hearted follower. There is much more growing for you in some important areas of discipleship.
75 – 100	You are well on the way as a follower of Jesus, but keep on going! There are still important steps ahead for you.

This assessment is for your own personal benefit and not for comparing yourself with anyone else. It will help show you areas where you need to grow or obey Jesus more fully.

APPENDIX B

SERMON AND BIBLE STUDY SERIES

“Series – Discipleship Between Paul and Thessalonica”

Part One – Staying Connected

Intro: What is discipleship? Throughout the development of this research project discipleship will be defined as a process by which a disciple is enabled to grow within a certain doctrinal belief system and/or faith; more specifically Christianity. Using this definition for discipleship then begs of us to define the term disciple. The teacher will define disciple as one who follows a personal example to learn primarily through deeds and then through words of a teacher. The researcher developed these definitions by discovering the Greek origination of the word disciple which is the term *mathētēs* meaning “to learn” and the suffix –ship means being in the state or position of. As a result of one going through the discipleship model, the hope would be that this would be duplicated to develop more disciples. For this reason those who are serious about discipleship understand why this process is incomplete if a disciple only learns what is taught to them by word. A true disciple also must follow and watch their teacher so that they can take what has been learned and can put it into practice. The disciple that can put what has been learned into practice is now able to duplicate the process and produce more disciples.

This is what the Apostle Paul has done with the young church at Thessalonica. This is a church that Paul planted on his second missionary journey that he took with Timothy and Silas. Due to the persecution of influential Jews and Gentiles Paul was forced to leave this city after preaching to them for three consecutive Sabbaths in the local synagogue. Thessalonica is a very young church at the point of this letter; therefore Paul is very concerned about their growth and commitment to the faith. However Paul became ill and could not travel back to visit the young church so he sent Timothy to check on these new disciples of Jesus Christ. Timothy returns to Paul with very good news of how this church had remained faithful to God through Jesus Christ. But this news does not stop Paul from being the one teacher and leader that he should be for these new disciples. Paul writes them this very congratulatory letter, but he also charges them to follow him as he follows Christ. This is why Paul is a great example for us as a church in our efforts to make disciples. In the first part of this series we will examine Paul’s desire to stay connected to Thessalonica as he attempts to show his love and concern for them. Paul shows us how to disciple disciples through word and deed. He reaches out to them to stay connected to them even after their conversion.

Consistent in Prayer (1:2-3)

The Apostle Paul is constantly praying for the new converts.

“We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor

prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”
(1:2-3)

- Whenever Paul, Timothy, and Silas pray, they mention the Thessalonians before God. Notice that Paul is praying “always” (verse 2) and “continually” (verse 3). He only prays for them on two occasions; that’s day and night. Even as he is working at his trade of sewing tents he is praying. Paul does not allow his jobs to keep him from making disciples. He loves the new disciples; they are always on his heart.
- Paul understands that the first thing that he must do for the people that he is discipling is pray for them. Here Paul totally understands that he is not capable of caring for them in his own power so he depends on prayer. Why does Paul depend on prayer? Do you remember the personality of Paul? Paul can be quick tempered and not very cordial at times. In the letter to the Galatians as Paul is trying to teach law versus grace he loses his temper while talking about circumcision and tells them that he hopes that they emasculate themselves.¹ Paul understands that in his humanity he is not always capable to be a teacher through deeds. So he prays for them constantly that even when he fails that God will keep them.
- However Paul’s attempt to reach out to them in love shows that he is willing to overcome his shortcomings for the good of the Kingdom. Are we willing to step outside of our normal persona for the good of the kingdom? If it comes down to us being ourselves or denying ourselves which one would we choose? Paul chose to be a vessel for God and understood that wherever he fail short, having a consistent prayer life could make up for the shortcomings. As we go out to make disciples let us remember that our success is dependent upon having a strong prayer life. Our prayer life is what maintains our connection to God. For if we don’t have a connection ourselves we will not be able to convince the unconvinced to be convinced that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God!

Disciples are Imitators (1:5b-6a)

When Paul had to suddenly leave Thessalonica, his adversaries tried to tarnish his character. So Paul clues that the Thessalonians aren’t tricked by the trickery of his enemies. They know his manner of life. Indeed, they had imitated him -- and the Lord.

“You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord” (1:5b-6a).

At a different time Paul used this same concept with the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 11:1:

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (NIV).

¹ Galatians 5:12.

- Actions speak louder than words as the old cliché would teach. And this is very true in terms of engaging in discipleship. It is important to know how to say and what to say, but integrity means that I live what I say!! It's so important that disciples who are making disciples are cautiously emulating Christ; if not, disciples who follow you can develop some very un-Christ like characteristics. It's likening to the charge that parents have to offer virtuous examples to children that shape their lives after what they perceive in their parents.
- Often times we hear individuals suggest that they don't need church. They believe that they can study the Scriptures at their personal homes. They use the excuse that they can have a private faith. Not true according to the Bible! The Christian faith depicted for us in the Word of God happens in community. Those who detach themselves from the Christian community cannot receive the dynamic character development that Jesus envisioned: (1) Christian role models to imitate, and (2) spiritual gifts in the body to shape them up and assist in healthy Christian growth. We can say to ourselves that we are fine without church, but that is deception endorsed by Satan. The Christian church was Jesus' vehicle to assist in growing you and me -- and to include us in His work to our communities. In other words, the more imitators we have of Christ to reach out to others to become imitators also, the less crime we will see, the less we will have school drop outs, and we will do our part in ensuring that the Kingdom of Heaven is brought to Earth. Discipleship is incomplete if we only teach by words with no deeds!

Believe the Gospel (1:10)

“and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead -- Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath” (1:10).

Here is the nutshell of the Gospel and our main hope in one verse, Paul recaps for them the five basic foundations that are at the center of the good news. If you don't know anything else to teach, here is a good starting point of what to learn and say as we go out to make disciples.

1. Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. It is here in the first chapter that Paul reminds them of this basic truth so that he can build on the fact that Jesus is the Son of God throughout the rest of the book. Our belief is that we serve a true and living God whose son is alive and seated at his right hand talking to God on our behalf. It is almost like a father who does not want his children's friends to come in his house, however because he loves his children so much the father will appease his child and allow the child's friends into the home just because of the child! God gives us access to the kingdom just because of Jesus.
2. Jesus is coming back. Every chapter (except one) in 1 and 2 Thessalonians has something to say about Christ's coming. To a church dealing with persecution it was their hope that Jesus' return would be soon. They desired Jesus to come back to rescue them. We don't know when Jesus will return but we can be confident in the fact that we have already been rescued and forgiven for our sins!

3. Jesus Christ is alive. Paul says this a second time in the letter: “We believe that Jesus died and rose again.²” This is a major theme of hope in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. This is also our hope! Jesus is alive and through him God is orchestrating our lives by divine providence for the greater good.
4. Jesus Christ is our Savior. He died in our place, as he placed our sins upon him on the cross to rescue us from the punishment we so richly deserve. He is constantly saving us from ourselves every day.
5. God’s wrath is coming upon sin. Many people of our time have excluded the notion of liability to God and even of the actuality of sin. Many don’t trust in the fury of God against sin or they suppress that thought some of the time. But that is the beauty of our faith. God loves the sinners but hates the sin. So when God’s wrath comes against sin he does it in a way that the sin is somehow taken away from the sinner in efforts that the sin does not destroy the people whom God Loves!

² 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

“Part Two -Traits of a Disciple-Maker”

Intro: If you’ve ever been falsely criticized you know how hard it is to bear. How personally devastated you feel. And you’re concerned that people will actually believe the lies. When Paul and his team were driven out of Thessalonica after only months of ministry, they were hammered with dozens of scurrilous allegations.

The Jews who had rejected Paul’s teaching had stirred up the mob to a frenzy. The crowd went *en masse* (as a whole) to get Paul. When they couldn’t find him, they took Jason, a Jew who had embraced the Christian message, and hauled him and other believers before the civil authorities. A riot was in the immediate future. Completely false charges were made to discredit Paul and the fledgling church. It was a very difficult time. So we will examine this extremely difficult circumstance to pick out some of the character traits of a true disciple maker.

Disciple Makers are Positive Thinkers (2:1)

As soon as he could, Paul wrote this letter to reassure the Thessalonian believers and help put into perspective what had happened -- to set the record straight regarding his own character. But he also understood the need to ground these new Christians -- most of them fresh from paganism -- in Christian character themselves. He writes,

“You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure” (2:1).

- Paul begins with an evaluation of the success of his mission. To the Thessalonians it may have seemed cut short, aborted, a failure. Paul insists that his mission was not in vain. He had come to preach Christ and establish a Christian congregation in the city—and had succeeded, even though his part in it had been cut short by vicious persecution.
- Jesus’ last words to his disciples, recorded at the end of Matthew’s gospel, outline the centrality of Jesus’ mission to make disciples:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20).

- Paul had made disciples in Thessalonica. The mission was a success, in so far that he followed the “Prime Directive.”
- Paul’s attitude reflects how disciple makers are to act while making disciples. If Paul focused on all of the bad, he could discourage those who are following him. How often do those who watch you as a Christian see you complaining, focusing on the negative, and/or seeking your next moment of stimulation in efforts to

relieve yourself of pain? True disciple makers can focus on the positive things because even though they see bad all around them, they continue to walk by faith and not by sight!!

Disciple Makers are Courageous (2:2)

Paul's first task is to help the Thessalonians understand that making disciples must often take place among risks. That's the nature of this spiritual warfare.

"We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition" (2:2).

- I was beat up and imprisoned in Philippi, Paul reminds them, but that didn't stop me from declaring the gospel to you. The first character trait that he hopes them to comprehend -- and emulate -- is courage to speak the gospel, even if people oppose them. "We dared to tell you his gospel," Paul says. "Dared" (NIV), "had courage" (NRSV), "were bold" (KJV) is *parrēsiaizomai*, "speak freely, openly, fearlessly." Here it has the sense, "have the courage, venture." Christian courage and boldness is vital to the success of Christ's kingdom.
- Jesus told his disciples many times that preaching the gospel is dangerous -- but necessary.

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:12-14).

- In our day, many, many believers have been effectively silenced by the "opposition." We're afraid to offend, not wanting to be ostracized from polite society. And so we lack courage and boldness. We are unable to take the risks necessary to propagate the Christian faith, and so the number of new believers dwindles over time. Why? Sometimes we are afraid to be Christians in front of our old friends... Sometimes we are too shy to make a statement... But we are to constantly, through prayer, stay in connection with the Holy Spirit to help us be what we should be as Christians. Lord please give me courage!
- Courage in the face of opposition is one of the first character traits of effective disciple-makers.

Disciple Makers are Care-givers (2:6b-8)

Rather than expecting his spiritual children to support their parent, Paul pours out himself for them.

As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were

delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us (2:6b-8).

I look at the qualities mentioned in this chapter as qualities of a disciple-maker, who doesn't seek to further his own interests, but the interests of those to whom God sends him or her. You may have a ministry as one of those disciple-makers—to one or two individuals, or even to a whole congregation.

Paul talks about the nurturing qualities that are especially found in mothers.

1. Gentleness. The Greek word “gentle” is *ēpios*. It has the root idea of “affable,” then, “mild, gentle.” When it’s used of persons it has the idea of “gentle, kind,” as well as “soothing, assuaging.”
2. Caring. “Caring” (NIV), “tenderly caring” (NRSV), “cherisheth” (KJV) is *thalpō*. In Greek literature often in the sense, “make warm.” Here it is figurative: “cherish, comfort.”
3. Sharing one’s life. In our day, ministers are sometimes taught to keep a “professional distance” from parishioners. And sadly we live in a day where many people want this distant and aloof king/queen as a spiritual leader. They feel as though if they share too much with one another they will not be able to “respect” a certain person as a spiritual leader or pastor. Don’t get too close, they are warned. Of course, there are dangers and vulnerabilities in getting close. But Paul reminds the Thessalonians of his own ministry style -- “sharing... our own lives” (2:8b). Disciples are not best made through arms-length teaching, but by sharing life-to-life. That’s how Jesus did it, and so did Paul. And that’s how mothers raise their sons and daughters.

Disciple Makers What Their Lifestyle (2:10)

In contrast to accusations they have heard, Paul asks the Thessalonians to consider what they have seen in his conduct and lifestyle.

“You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed” (2:10).

1. “Holy” or “pure” means that we live “healthy and whole” lives that will be pleasing to God. A healthy and whole life means that you do your best to void your life of the things that have the ability to weaken you. A healthy and whole physical body means that you take care of it by working your muscles and keeping harmful things out of it so that it may function properly. The same applies with living a holy life. You are not afraid to stretch yourself mentally and spiritually. You are willing to admit that you don’t know it all so that you can grow in wisdom and spirit and you are willing to get toxic people, habits, and toxics memories out of your life. If we’re making disciples --

or raising children -- they'll surely see the inconsistencies in us if we're not seeking to do this. "Do as I say, not as I do," does not work!

2. "Righteous" is similar, but it emphasizes our balance and uprightness according to God's standard. To be righteous is to be spiritually attractive. i.e. Nobody wants to be around people with no balance who are so heavenly minded they are of no earthly good!
3. "Blameless" suggests that we are not intentional in making mistakes and sin. i.e., I'm going to do XYZ and then ask the Lord to forgive me because He is faithful and just to do so!
 - Of course, we'll sin now and again. The difference is that we are sincerely seeking for our lives to be pleasing to God, not just mouthing the words. In a job setting, a worker who strives to do a difficult task accurately may make some mistakes as he or she is learning, but eventually the job becomes second nature. Yes, there are occasional mistakes. But the mistakes don't characterize the performance. That's the way we should look at sin. Not as defeated Christians, but as Christians who believe in Christ's victory over our lives.
 - When we do sin—before our disciples or before our children—then we acknowledge the sin (confess) and ask forgiveness of those we have sinned against or disappointed. If we just bluster on through as if we had never sinned, people will see us as hypocrites. If we are honest and transparent about it, people will see us as sincere, but imperfect, servants of Christ. And that will be enough to be effective disciple-makers.

Part Three – The Passion of a Disciple-Maker

Intro: In Lesson 2 we examined the traits of a disciple-maker. In this lesson we'll examine the passions of Paul, the disciple-maker. As we examine Paul's passion of making disciples for Jesus Christ let us also think about what is our passion for the kingdom. Let us also be honest if we don't have any passion for the kingdom of God. But your passion can go way beyond Paul's passions. Your passion can be Christian Education to ensure that God's people understands God's way of doing things. You can be passionate about the loving and fellowshiping of Christians so you want to find ways that Christians can have a fun blessed time together. It could be worship, singing, preaching, etc. but the goal for this lesson is to help you reconnect with your passion for the kingdom of God here on Earth!

Paul is Passionate about Fellowship (2:17-18)

As you may recall, Paul's mission to Thessalonica was abruptly cut short when the Jews fomented a riot and then blamed Paul and his followers for causing trouble, resulting in their expulsion from the city.

"Brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you -- certainly I, Paul, did, again and again -- but Satan stopped us" (2:17-18).

- You can feel Paul's heart in these verses. When he was forced to leave the city it was difficult for the new church, but it was wrenching for Paul himself. He describes it as being "torn away from you" (NIV). The word Paul uses (*aporphanizo*) introduces the image a sudden separation of parent and child. The word can refer either to children deprived of their parents or to parents deprived of their children. Here it refers to bereavement in general the emphasis is on unnatural separation, both forcible and painful.
- Paul mentions his emotion of "intense longing" to see them. Paul feels the separation acutely, even though it has been only a short time -- probably just a few months at most. But this shows how much it pained Paul that he could not be with his newly converted disciples of Jesus Christ. Notice that Paul does not say he longed to teach them in the synagogues and/or temple again. Paul simply wants to be with them. He wants to fellowship and share their lives together. When Christians can get to the place where love, laughter, good times, and helpful ministry are all flowing they love to see each other. When a euphoric atmosphere is being developed among disciples it is not a chore to go to church, you can't wait to get there.

Paul is Passionate about being Blessed (Rewarded) by God (2:19-20)

“For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy” (2:19-20).

- When we think of “crown,” we think of a king’s crown. But the word Paul uses indicates a laurel wreath that was awarded to the winning runner or athlete in the games. Paul uses this image in 1 Corinthians:
- “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.” (1 Corinthians 9:25)
- Paul’s converts are his “crown” or prize, the evidence that he has not “run in vain” (Galatians 2:2). He calls the Philippian believers, “my joy and my crown” (Philippians 4:1). These converts in Thessalonica will be the basis of his glorying “in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes.” This “crown” will be Paul’s “glory” (NIV), “crown of boasting” (NRSV), “crown of rejoicing” (KJV), *kauchēsis*, “act of taking pride in something, boasting,” or perhaps, “that which constitutes a source of pride, object of boasting, reason for boasting.”
- In other words, Paul will present his converts to Christ at his return as the proof of his labor that is deserving of a reward. So Paul bases his being blessed and/or rewarded by the labor that he does for God and most importantly the way that God wants him to work. Paul as we have discussed before is not exactly a people person, and he works a job sewing tents. However he does not allow his life and the way that it is going to hinder him from doing God’s work, in God’s way so that he can be rewarded by GOD! Saints, the only way we can truly be blessed by God is by doing things God’s way. If you want blessings that you will not have room enough to receive God says you have to trust me with 10% of your income. We often wonder why we have to struggle, but have we asked ourselves the question, “Have I done my best to live as a Christian the way God desires?” I understand that God’s ways seem hard and illogical. “Love your enemies!” Pray for them who curse you and speak all manner of evil against you (that means gossip about you behind your back and smile in your face).” “Give and it shall be given.” “Count it all joy when you fall in to many trials and temptations.” “Make disciples of all nations,” even though you’re not perfect yourself. God’s ways don’t make sense, but they are designed that way to keep you depending on HIM and not yourself. And when we start doing things God’s way then we can be blessed by God. I know that your mother can bless you, father can bless you, companion can bless you, spouse can bless you, friends can bless you, but they all have temporary pleasure stamped across them. But when God blesses you his blessings are eternal. He gives wisdom to make it through tough decisions. The book of Deuteronomy says that he gives you strength to make wealth. Wealth is different from riches because one bad decision and four baby mommas can get rid of riches, but wealth is generational. Peace that surpass all understanding. Protection that that which is able to devour you! Life and life more abundantly! A

home in heaven for all of eternity! Does anybody want to be blessed by God? Then we have to do things God's way!

- By now you may be feeling rather uncomfortable. That's because the idea of receiving rewards for our good works here on earth is embarrassing to modern-day Christians for two reasons:

1. Free grace. First, some of us have been so indoctrinated concerning God's free grace that rewards for "works" don't seem to fit into our theology. However, rewards (payments for work done) are nearly always distinguished in Scripture from salvation (freely offered by God's grace). Paul clearly differentiates them in Ephesians 2:8-9 and 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.

Salvation by grace is the rock solid foundation that we do not lose, because it is anchored by our faith in the finished redemption of Christ on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. Rewards for works are the "icing on the cake."

To work for rewards seems somehow unappreciative of the freeness of God's grace in salvation. Salvation seems like enough -- more than enough, all we could ever ask or think. But no matter how you or I might feel emotionally, the New Testament clearly teaches that there will be rewards in addition to the gift of salvation, when Christ returns.

2. Sincere love. Second, we pride ourselves on serving out of pure love for God, not for any gain. Surely, obeying the first commandment, to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37) should be the motivation for our work -- our "labors of love," as we call them.

But in spite of that love, Jesus -- and his Apostles Paul and John -- teach us that we will be rewarded for our labors.

- Paul is concerned that his converts continue in their faith so that he won't have labored "for nothing" (Philippians 2:16; 1 Thessalonians 3:5). Yes, Paul loves God supremely, but he is looking forward to glorying in these "trophy of grace," when Christ appears, much like the master in the Parable of the Talents, who invites the faithful servant to "enter into the joy of your master," to join in the welcome-home party that is going on inside the house in celebration of the master's return (Matthew 25:21). Indeed, their faithful service is an indication that these servants loved their master, just as the refusal to use the "talent" given him is an indication of the unfaithful servant's hatred for his master (Matthew 25:24-26). True disciple makers are passionate about being blessed and about seeing those who they disciple blessed!

Paul is Passionate about being a Good Steward (3:1-4)

Now we move from a teaching portion of the letter to a narrative one. The warm heart of a disciple-maker is clear in this passage.

So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know (1 Thessalonians 3:1-4).

The suspense is killing Paul. Good stewards are creative and do not let Satan hinder them from taking care of what God has put in their care. Have the Thessalonian believers survived persecution with their faith intact? Paul can get there so he creatively delegates responsibility in order to take care of his new disciples of Christ and he dispatches Timothy from Athens to find out. Timothy doesn't catch up with Paul until he gets to Corinth (18:5). Timothy is just a young man, but he is given this important assignment. Paul can't return to Thessalonica because he had been declared *persona non grata* by the city leaders, but Timothy has a lower profile and can "fly under the radar" without raising trouble for the church.

Notice Timothy's assignment in this return mission:

"To strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials" (3:2b-3a).

Persecution is difficult, especially for new believers. Paul is concerned that the pressure would be too much for this new church, so Timothy's role is to "strengthen and encourage."

- "Strengthen" (NIV, NRSV), "establish" (KJV) is *stērizō*. The basic meaning is "to fix firmly in a place, set up, establish, support." Here it is used figuratively, "to cause to be inwardly firm or committed, confirm, establish, strengthen."
- "Encourage" (NIV, NRSV), "comfort" (KJV) is *parakaleō*, a word that has a wide scope: "to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage" as well as "to instill someone with courage or cheer, comfort, encourage, cheer up."

Lessons for Disciples

In these verses we've formed a picture of Paul's heart and passion.

- Great love and longing for his spiritual children.
- Expectation of rewards for his disciple-making ministry at Christ's coming.
- Willingness to delegate ministry duties to his assistant Timothy in order to be a good steward.
- Endurance of persecution as our lot as believers in this world.
- Delight in the growth and increasing maturity of his spiritual children.

May God work in us some of these qualities as we seek to make a difference in our world!

Part Four – Living/Worshipping in a Healthy Christian Community

Intro: If you've been around churches for a while, you begin to see that many of them have sick or unhealthy community dynamics. Sometimes you even find factionalism, judgmentalism, and power plays of various kinds. We've got to get our church communities healthy if we expect to attract people to Christ and create an environment in which they can be disciplined effectively. In this section of Paul's letter to the church at Thessalonica he gives them keys to build a healthy community that would enable their church to grow and be effective in their city. Paul's aim is to make them aware that the outer community always has its eye on the inner community and how they handle themselves in various situations. Let's see what says are the keys the having a healthy church fit for discipleship.

Respect Your Leaders (5:11-13)

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves (5:11-13).

- The church is building up and encouraging one another, but from Paul's exhortation, they apparently have a problem with respecting leadership. This doesn't necessarily mean that they had bad leaders. You may have great leaders, but could have people in the congregation who covet power for themselves.
- Such people speak ill of a leader behind his/her back and may act disrespectfully to his face. Their theory, often not thought through, is that if I can diminish the leader's respect and power, then I can increase my own influence. But it's a worldly view that seeks to increase one's own influence at the expense of another. The best and most godly way is for the leaders to work together, speak well of one another, and build up each other's influence. Leadership is not a "zero sum game." There shouldn't be just a single winner; everybody can win.

Paul points to the role of leaders of the congregation in three ways:

1. They labor among you. "Work hard" (NIV), "labor" (NRSV, KJV) is *kopiaō*. In classical Greek it carries the idea of "to grow weary, tired, exhausted" with toil or burdens or grief. In the New Testament it mostly carries the extended meaning "to exert oneself physically, mentally, or spiritually, work hard, toil, strive, struggle." Sometimes laypeople think that their pastor only works when they are present. Wrong!
2. They "have charge of you" (NRSV), "are over you" (NIV, KJV). The verb is *proistēmi*, "to exercise a position of leadership, rule, direct, be at the head (of)." The word is used of fathers managing families (1 Timothy 3:4, 12) and of

exercising leadership in a congregation, here, Romans 12:8, and 1 Timothy 5:17. There are people—sometimes we ourselves—who don’t like to submit to the leadership of others, but we are commanded: “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority” (Hebrews 13:17, also 7). The opposite of submitting to God-placed leadership is rebellion.

3. They “admonish you.” The verb is *noutheteō*, “to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct, admonish, warn, instruct.” Leaders are often the ones who provide correction to members who get out of line. It may be difficult, and sometimes unpopular, but gentle, loving correction is essential for a Christian community to remain healthy and mission-focused.
- Paul’s instruction, “Be at peace with one another” is a hint that there was disorder in the church because of the lack of respect for leaders. Now this is very important in our home lives because many times we are livid with our children and grandchildren because they attempt to usurp authority and do things that they know they shouldn’t do. We want to whip them and punish them before we ask, “Have they seen a disrespect of authority in their parent?” They can’t learn how to and when to submit to authority if the parents don’t show any example for them to live by.

Faithful Ministry (5:14)

“And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone” (5:14).

Now Paul speaks to the church in general. The pronoun “you” and the word “beloved” or “brothers” are in the plural. Note that the plural of “brothers,” *adelphoi*, can refer to both “brothers and sisters,” as the NRSV indicates. In verse 12, Paul referred to the role of leaders to admonish the church. Now he is more specific about the general approach to shepherding and ministering needed in Thessalonica. Verse 14 could even be a four-part guideline for the main types of ministry that every church should have:

1. Ministries that admonish the idle. “Those who are idle” (NIV), “idlers” (NRSV), “them that are unruly” (KJV) is the adjective *ataktos*, which means, “not in the proper order.” It is sometimes used of soldiers who are out of the ranks. Here it is used in the sense of “being out of step and going one’s own way, disorderly, insubordinate,” though some prefer the sense “idle, indolent.” Paul uses the adverb of this root (*ataktōs*) in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, where the context is people who don’t work but are dependent upon others. So “idlers” is probably a more useful translation of what Paul was referring to in our verse. He had admonished them concerning idleness in 4:11-12. Perhaps “idlers” could be applied to the way people behave in church, too. Some people come to church only to be served, not to serve. They are takers, not givers. Everyone has at least one spiritual gift. It’s the role of leaders to “admonish the idle,” both in physical things and in spiritual ministry. Therefore a church that is serious about discipleship should have ministries such as mentoring ministries (the wisdom of the seasoned saints for the

younger saints *not just the children because some young adults could benefit from wisdom too*), job training ministries, health and wellness ministries (teaching us how taking care of the body is Godly), etc.

2. Ministries that encourage the timid. The church has been suffering persecution, and some need to be encouraged to stand up rather than hunker down in order to avoid any criticism or persecution.

3. Ministries that help the weak. The weak referred to in light of persecution are probably those who are weak in faith, though the principle would apply to those who are ill or weak in other ways. The church is to encourage them and lift up their hands. Though we're not to help in such a way that we encourage an unhealthy dependence (4:11-12). Leaders often visit the sick, or encourage those with a special ministry to the sick to visit them.

4. Be patient with everyone. "Patient" is *makrothymeō*, "to bear up under provocation without complaint, be patient, forbearing." Leaders, especially, must learn to be even tempered, even with those who don't deserve it. Make allowances for those who haven't grown in Christ as much as they should. Parents learn patience; so must church leaders.

Kind, Not Vengeful (5:15)

One mark of a healthy congregation is the absence of a judgmental spirit. In many churches, unfortunately, you sense a kind of spiritual pride in their own righteousness, and a condescending attitude towards those who are not as spiritual, or even outright secular. Our attitude reflects rather accurately how well we've matured in incorporating *agapē* love into our church life.

Part of this kind of non-judgmental, open love, is the absence of vengefulness -- a childish desire to get even.

"Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else" (5:15).

- To the Roman church, Paul writes on this topic more expansively.
- "17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:17-21)
- Peter, too, commands the same kind of loving behavior when provoked.
- "Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing." (1 Peter 3:9)

- Jesus was very clear that his followers must be forgiving (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; 18:23-35). People who must pay back every hurt are miserable, selfish, vengeful wrecks, not healthy Christians who take their cues from Christ himself.

Disciple Lessons

Paul has covered a lot of ground in this lesson, offering a number of keys to health in a congregation and in a Christian's personal life.

1. Respect for leaders (5:12-13)
2. Faithful ministry to the flock (5:14)
3. Kindness rather than vengeance (5:15)

Part Four-B Living/Worshipping in a Healthy Christian Community

Intro: Last week we began our lesson on Living and worshipping in a healthy Christian community. Paul taught us in the first portion of this lecture that we must respect our leaders, he says that we must be consistent in our ministry to the flock, and finally he says be kind, not vengeful. As we complete this series to help us complete the doctoral project entitled, Building Relationships through Friendly Fellowship for Effective Discipleship, let us consider how Paul points us to how to accomplish effective discipleship with the help of the Spirit.

Be Joyful, Prayerful, and Thankful (5:16-18)

The next key to a healthy congregation -- and personal life -- is spiritual enthusiasm. In this memorable passage, Paul commands,

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (5:16-18).

It almost sounds like a surface platitude until you begin to think about what Paul is saying.

Be Joyful Always (5:16)

- “Be joyful always” (NIV), “rejoice always” (NRSV), “rejoice evermore” (KJV) is a command to rejoice. This is not the same as a command to “be happy in spite of yourself.” Or to “put on a good face.” It is a command to continue to praise God and enjoy the presence of God, even when circumstances around you are adverse. As a child the deacon board of our church used to take the youth of the church and teach them the Westminster Shorter Catechism of Faith. How I wish that we would get back to the days where we taught our kids and adults the principles of the Christian faith!! They remind us why we practice our faith and give us a clear understanding of what we are practicing. But the first article of the Westminster Catechism asks the question, “What is the chief end of mankind?” The answer is, “To glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” To glorify God means to extol him or celebrate all of the majestic things that he has done simply because you and I were created to worship Him! (Let’s go to 1 Peter 2:9) Then after glorifying God we are to enjoy Him forever. Therefore, when we stop finding joy in God that means that our faith has been distracted and our focus has shifted from God to wallowing in our circumstances. Paul tells the Philippians:
- “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4)
- We are to rejoice always, all the time. This means that putting our focus on God and finding joy in him is to be a continual life habit and pattern. Developing a practice of continual rejoicing is a worthy goal for our spiritual growth. In other words, it’s virtually impossible to be a disciple-make with disposition that would make one believe that your God hasn’t done enough to give you JOY!

Pray Continually (5:17)

- Pray continually! Some strands of the Eastern Orthodox Church seek to fulfill this command by repeating the “Jesus Prayer” thousands of times a day, again and again by rote until it is engrained in the mind. But Paul’s command doesn’t mean mumbling prayers without stop during all our waking hours. It means that prayer should be an integral part of our lives that we are constantly turning to prayer, rather than forgetting about talking to God for days at a time. Look at Paul’s practice in this letter and elsewhere:
- “We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father....” (1:2-3)
- “And we also thank God continually because....” (2:13)
- “Night and day we pray most earnestly that....” (3:10)
- “God ... is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times....” (Romans 1:9-10)
- “I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.” (Ephesians 1:16)
- “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” (Ephesians 6:18)
- “We have not stopped praying for you and asking God to....” (Colossians 1:9)
- “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” (Colossians 4:2)
- The conclusion I reach is that continual prayer is the spiritual practice of shooting up prayers to God constantly -- perhaps every few minutes as you think of something to pray about. God wants us to learn a life of prayer, of talking to God constantly about whatever is going on in our lives, or about the thoughts he brings to our minds. Pray continually!

Give Thanks in All Circumstances (5:18a)

- “Give thanks” is *eucharisteō*, “to express appreciation for benefits or blessings, give thanks, express thanks, render/return thanks.” There’s a key insight in Paul’s letter to the Philippian church:
- “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6)
- So often we pray whining prayers, complaining, begging prayers, pleading prayers. What would happen if we started praying prayers filled with thanksgiving? What separates whining prayers from faith-filled prayers is thanksgiving. Thanksgiving turns us to look at all the times God has helped us in the past, his unchanging character, his marvelous promises -- and to thank God for them. We can’t do that without increasing our faith. Thanksgiving is the language of faith.
- Paul says to “give thanks in all circumstances.” Notice that it does not say, “thank God for all circumstances,” but “*in* all circumstances.” Sometimes we are in the midst of an evil attack. I think it’s stupid to pray, “Thank you God that Satan is

attacking me and causing me to be raped.” We’re not thankful for evil. But in the midst of evil we can give thanks to God for his sovereignty, for his power, for his presence, and for his final victory over evil. We win -- so we should always give thanks no matter what is going on.

This Is God’s Will for You in Christ Jesus (5:18b)

- What is God’s will for you right now? At the moment you may not know what the future holds or the answer to some crucial decision you need to make. But you can be sure about one thing -- how God wants you to act in the circumstances in which you find yourself.
- “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (5:16-18)
- Imagine what would happen if you -- or the people in our congregation -- were to put this into practice consistently. You’d grow healthy fast!

Don’t Quench the Spirit, but Test Prophetic Words (5:19-22)

Paul is sharing brief instructions as he concludes this letter. Here’s one that leads to congregational health.

“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil” (5:19-22).

- John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize “with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Luke 3:16b). The Spirit is a fire. He cannot be controlled or domesticated by us. When we try to restrain him or pour cold water over him and his working, we err.
- Apparently, the Thessalonian church had had some bad experiences with people in the congregation prophesying things that didn’t occur or that were doctrinally incorrect. They may have gotten to the point that when someone prophesied in the congregation, there was a negative feeling. Prophecies weren’t appreciated, perhaps not allowed at all.
- “Treat with contempt” (NIV), “despise” (NRSV, KJV) is *exoutheneō*, “to show by one’s attitude or manner of treatment that an entity has no merit or worth, disdain.” Here, probably, “to have no use for something as being beneath one’s consideration, reject disdainfully.” When we begin to despise that true working of God through the Spirit because of our prejudices and doctrines, we’re in the same danger as the Pharisees who wanted to destroy Jesus for healing on the Sabbath.

All that Paul is saying is if we are going to be able to Respect our Leaders, be consistent in ministry, and be kind as opposed to vengeful it’s going to take Prayer, Thanksgiving, and Rejoicing about the power of God. Saints we must be focused because God will NOT look at how we have pride in the church that we worship at on the great judgment day. God will consider how well we tried to fulfill the last command that Jesus gave us before he left earth! “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything

I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
(Matthew 28:19-20)”

Sermon Series: *Relational Discipleship: Growing the Church from the Outside In:*
Exodus 18 – Luke 15

Part One – “Step Outside of the Norm”

One of the most important and disturbing books of the last five or six years is entitled, *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam. The book is not about the sport of bowling, as much as it is about the fact that more and more people in American society are choosing to do more and more things alone. Bowling has always been the ultimate group activity. Whether you belong to a bowling league, or go bowling with a group of family or friends, bowling was always viewed as something that people did together. Sometimes you went bowling together for the sake of the competition, and sometimes you went bowling with a group simply for the sake of the companionship. But either way, people would go bowling as part of a group.

In Putnam’s book, the premise is that we are losing our sense of community in America, and the ultimate proof of the fact is the things that more and more people are doing alone. Bowling is, in fact, only a metaphor for a wide range of activities. People go to the movies alone, as well as to restaurants, concerts, athletic events and even vacation. Some of this may be explained by the fact that a large number of adults are living as singles, and companionship is not always readily available. However, says Putnam, the more significant issue facing our society is that people cannot or will not sustain relationships over any length of time. As a result of that fact, more and more people spend more and more of their time “bowling alone.”

There may be some areas of our lives where we can have just as much fun or just as rich of an experience when we are alone, as when we are in the company of others. However, there is one setting in which that can never be the case, and that is in our lives as Christians. At the very center of the Christian life is the word fellowship. The Christian life is not a solo venture where each one of us works out our relationship with God in isolation from all other believers. The best part of being a Christian is being a part of the fellowship of the church where you are constantly involved with other believers in the service of God.

There are some Christians who are content with a spiritual life that begins and ends with simply being a part of the membership of the church. That means that their names are on the church rolls, and they may attend a church service from time to time. However, being a part of the membership is not the same as being a part of the fellowship. Membership simply means that you are a number on a box of envelopes; fellowship means that you and I are committed to doing ministry and worship together, that we are mutually committed to the strength and vitality of this congregation, and we are ultimately defined

and directed by our common loyalty and obedience to God and to God's word as revealed in scripture. As we start down this road this morning, let me ask each one of you to consider this question; are you a part of the membership or a part of the fellowship of this church? Jethro became a part of the fellowship in Exodus 18. How did he become a part of the fellowship?

1. Jethro Acknowledged their God

When Jethro comes to the mountain, he does not come stuck in an old way of thinking. He comes acknowledging all that God has done in the life of the Israel camp. He comes releasing what he has been accustomed to and embracing the brand new by faith. I would have to argue that when he comes embracing the brand new, his faith was ignited by what God did for them; not what God has done for him. He does not "hate on" their blessing. But he comes with the attitude that if God can do it for them, I am confident that God can do the same for me.

Saints, let's be honest! What brought many of us to faith in Jesus Christ when we tried everything else in the world was what we saw in the lives of others. We have to learn to surround ourselves with people who are living testimonies of what God has done and can do.

But when you come into the knowledge of God and are blessed by God you have an obligation to spread the joy of God to bless somebody else!

2. Jethro Acknowledged their Principles

Jethro does not come empty handed. He comes bearing sacrifice of worship and worshipped their God on the mountain. He not only comes to worship their God but he comes worshipping their way. His faith is so excited that he wants to honor the God he now proclaims in and obedient way.

When we lift God together we find ourselves on one accord. When our principles are on one accord we don't have to fight each other. We can come together and tear down the enemy's kingdom with more power. We can be a fist that can pack a powerful punch as opposed to an open hand. We can meet people where they are and bring them to the full knowledge of God!!

Let us take a lesson from Jethro, get out of any selfish way, and let's have similar principles to strengthen the kingdom.

3. Jethro Acknowledges Their People

Finally, Jethro fellowshiped with the people of God. One of the worst things we can do is come to worship and fail to fellowship. It is very possible to find yourself in a sanctuary full of people and worship alone. It is very possible to come to church and see hundreds of people and feel lonely. Why? Because sometimes we do not acknowledge the people around us.

Jethro did not only worship but he ate and fellowshiped with the people. He got to know who he wanted to worship with. He built relationships that built trust.

Close: Church lets step outside of our normality of life. Let us take the time to appreciate what God is doing in the lives of others. When we start seeing new things, we will begin to see growth in our own lives. Amen!

Part 2 – Learn from Each Other

Exodus 18

Intro: The cliché that says, “No man/woman is an island” is more than a common saying. We are human beings that are interconnected and dependent on each other. So much so that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “What affects some of us directly affects all of us indirectly.” We all can learn something from each other. There are things that I am better at than you and there are things that you are better at than me.

This is the imagery we can see in the relationship between Jethro and Moses. Moses life teaches Jethro something about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And Jethro’s life teaches Moses something about administrating the people’s cam that God gave Moses stewardship over. They taught each other and they both became better people as a result.

So, how were they able to become better people by learning from one another?

1. They Spent Adequate Time Together.

When Jethro came to the mountain to be with the people; he did not just worship eat and leave. The text does not say, but I am sure the longer he stayed the more he learned about God. I’m convinced that you cannot be around God’s people and not learn something about God.

The longer he stayed he saw how he could help Moses. Jethro being a leader knew something about administration. He saw Moses wearing himself out and sought to help. But the text says something significant at the end. It tells us that he stayed another night. He stayed until he saw that Moses learned what had been taught. He doesn’t just leave Moses to fend for himself, but he sticks around to nurture what he just helped to birth in Moses

2. They Listened to Each Other.

Verse 19 tells us that Jethro instructs Moses to listen. Often times we spend time with people without listening to what they have to say. We were taught in pastoral care to be active listeners. It is by listening that we don’t misunderstand each other. It is by listening that we have the chance to interpret. It is by listening that we are able to help each other.

Don’t endanger relationships by failing to listen to each other. If we spend too much time talking, we only know our point of view and fail to grow.

3. They Produced Together.

Moses listened and then accepted the help he needed to produce a structure to help within the camp. The structure was beneficial for Moses. But he did not do it by himself. Moses had the help of someone who was proven at what he was teaching. Moses did not produce with a novice. He got the aid of a witness not a spectator.

Close: God has put people in our lives to learn things from. Let us live in this world together. The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us that two are better than one. Let us spend time together to build trust. Let us listen to each other to get understanding. And let us work together to be productive.

Part Three – “From a Far Way Off”

Luke 15

Intro: The worst church theology that I have ever heard is that one needs to get their lives in order before they begin to participate in church life. The church has never been the place that God intended to be a social club for people who have their lives in order. It is more of a hospital to help us deal with our issues that separate us from wholeness, holiness, and God. As a matter of fact we cannot get our lives together without the presence of God. And the beauty of it is God is big enough to handle our mess! The Apostle Paul reminds us, “While we were sinners Christ Jesus Died for us.” God reached out for us while we were yet a far ways off.

Jesus told those who ridiculed Him for eating with publicans and sinners a story about a father whose son was lost and a far way off. The son requested his portion of the inheritance and left into a far off country. He spent his money in riotous living. And when he got to his lowest of the low the bible says he came to himself and realized he had a father.

What did Jesus say about this father to show how God loves us from a far way off?

1. The Father Saw Him.

Verse twenty specifically said, “While he was a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion on him. The father did not turn a blind eye to him, but he saw his son. The son was depressed, yet he saw him. The son had the stench of the world on him, but the father saw him. The son was bare foot, and the father saw him. Isn’t it good news that we can’t be so low, grimy, and dirty that the father is not able to see him?

I don’t know what God saw you in, but aren’t you glad that God saw you. That is why we must not turn a blind eye to the problems that the people around us go through. There is value in seeing each other.

2. The Father Restored Him.

The son came with a prepared speech. The speech was to simply ask to be lowered to a hired servant. All the son wants to do is eat. But God has a way of blowing our minds. Please don’t put God in a box! He is able to do exceeding and abundantly above anything you could ask or think.

The father exceeded the son’s expectation. The son came desiring the employment, but the father extended grace. How often do we extend grace? God wants the church to extend grace to those who are a far ways off!

3. The Father Celebrated Him.

The father threw a feast for the son. He celebrated the son with a party. The father said let's celebrate my son for he was lost but now he is found! God is happy when those who are a far ways off seek God for help to come back home.

Close: We are never too far for God to reach out to us. I believe if the old church were here today they would sing, "What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms! I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms!"

Part Four – “The Older Brother Syndrome”

Luke 15

Intro: I really love hard workers because they are truly hard to come by. The Bible will agree with me because it says the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. However, work is empty when there is no fellowship to accompany the work. One can get lonely, frustrated, and depressed when they find themselves working without friends.

We’ve been talking for three weeks about what we can do to induce relationship driven discipleship. I believe that now it will be helpful to discuss some things that we should not do to keep good relationships in the church and abroad.

Today we look at the older brother who was angered at the celebration for the younger brother. He addressed his father to show his displeasure for the celebration for this rebellious son. He did not even want to join in on the celebration for his younger brother. I do not understand how one could be so mad that they would rather work than party. He did not want to reach out as the father had done. He did not want to show love as the father had done. He just wanted to be angry instead of doing his part to heal relationships.

What are some things that we should not do if we want an effective disciple making church?

1. Never Believe that your Work Merits Favor.

The first thing the older son argues to the father is what he has done. He talked about his service. And he talked about how he had never transgressed against his father. But the father had plenty of hired hands. The father had enough to never be affected by one person’s lack of faithfulness. The father had enough to be faithful even when there are those who were not faithful.

Our works cannot save us. We are saved by grace through faith. Our works are done because we love the Lord. Our works are done because we are gracious that the Lord woke us up this morning. We work in the vineyard because God kept us when we did not want to be kept. We bless God with our gifts because he first gave them to us.

2. Never Accuse People Falsely.

The older son accused the younger son of sleeping with harlots. The parable never spoke of harlots before the elder brother began to accuse. False accusations ruin relationships. It is pertinent to always get to know people and learn where they have been before we start accusing and assuming. We do a disservice to the church and our personal reputation when we accuse people falsely.

Our only concern ought to be is just knowing the same God that forgave you and me of our stuff, is the same God that can deliver someone else from their stuff. It doesn't matter what our fellowman or woman is going through. The only thing that matters is that God is able!

3. Never Avoid Fellowship.

The elder brother was so proud of his work that he failed to reconnect with his brother. The father simply wanted a reconnection before the younger brother went back to work. The father's attempt was to remind the younger son that he was loved. But the elder brother missed out on a golden opportunity to rekindle the years that they played together.

But thank God that when others reject you it doesn't stop God from celebrating you.

Close: I fully agree that we should work while it is day. But part of our work is to love one another. Our work is in vain if we don't do it in love.

APPENDIX C
GUEST SURVEY AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Guest Survey

	Strongly Agree-5	Agree-4	Neutral-3	Disagree-2	Strongly disagree-1
1. Pastoral Presence					
* I liked seeing a pastor will fellowship with their people.					
* I feel comfortable when religious leadership is participating in the life of people.					
* An approachable leader is an attractive leader.					
* I am willing to follow friendly leadership.					
2. Spiritual Growth	5	4	3	2	1
* I would be willing to join a fun loving church.					
* A church where I feel a connection to the people is important.					
* I believe that spiritual growth is accomplished together as a people helping each other.					
* I like being invited to church.					
* Over the past year, I have memorized a verse of Scripture each week.					

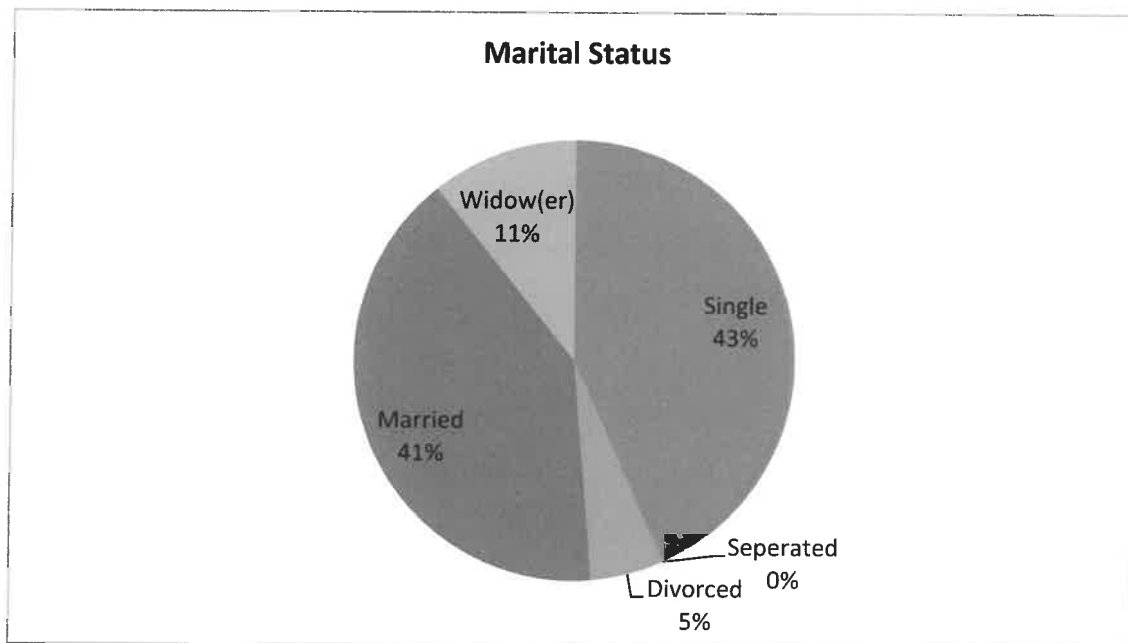
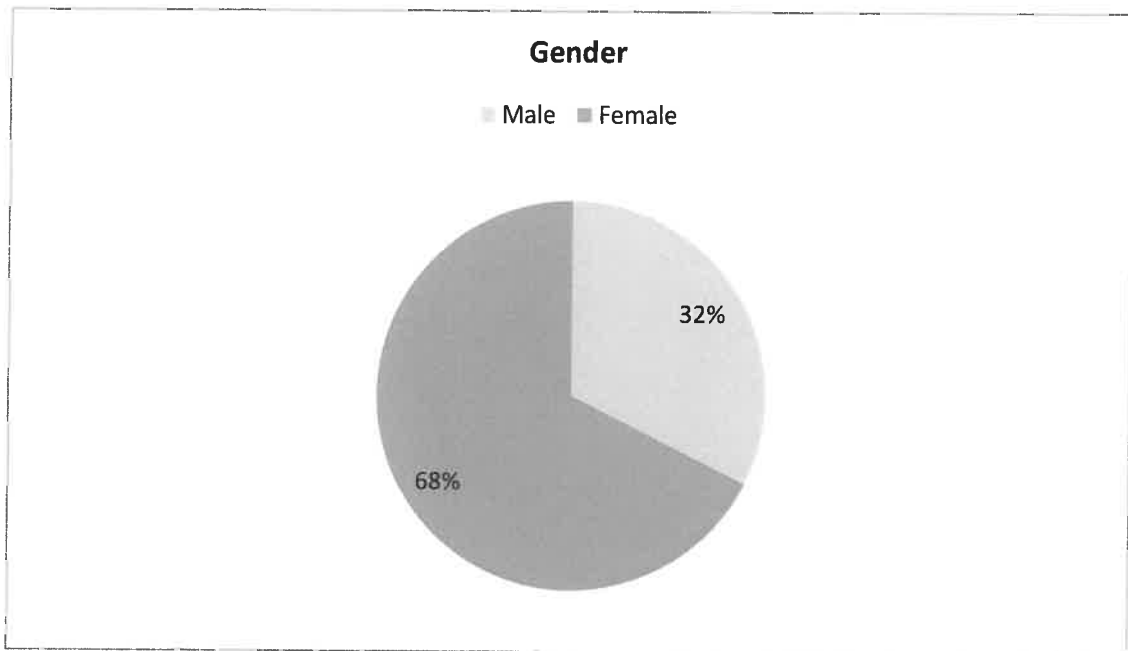
Interview Questionnaire

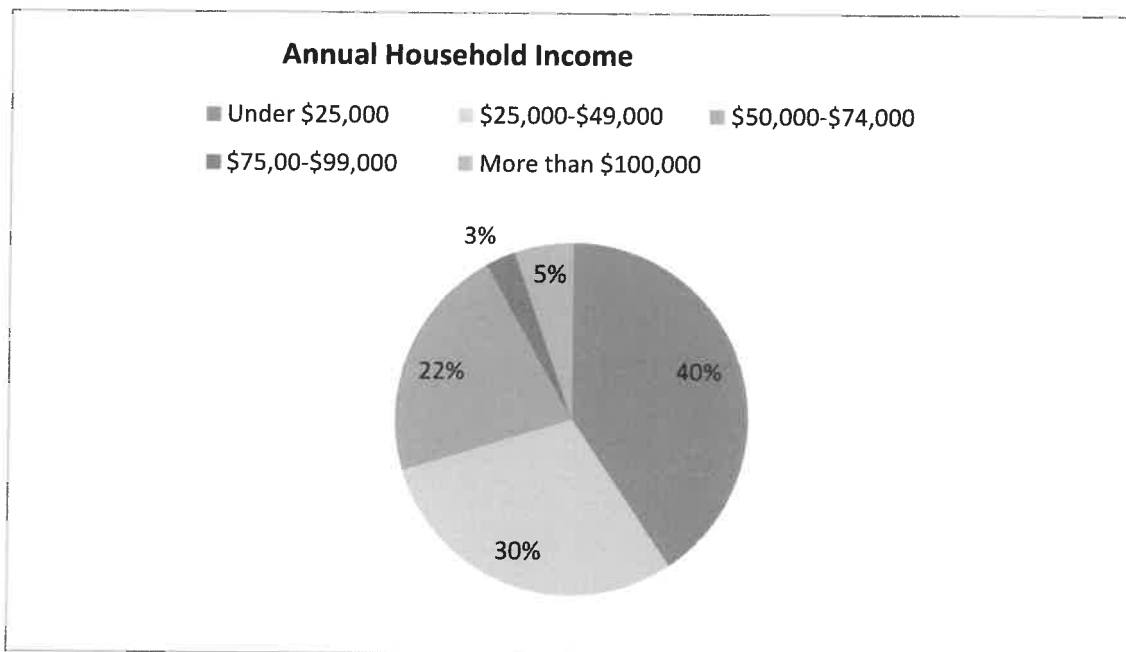
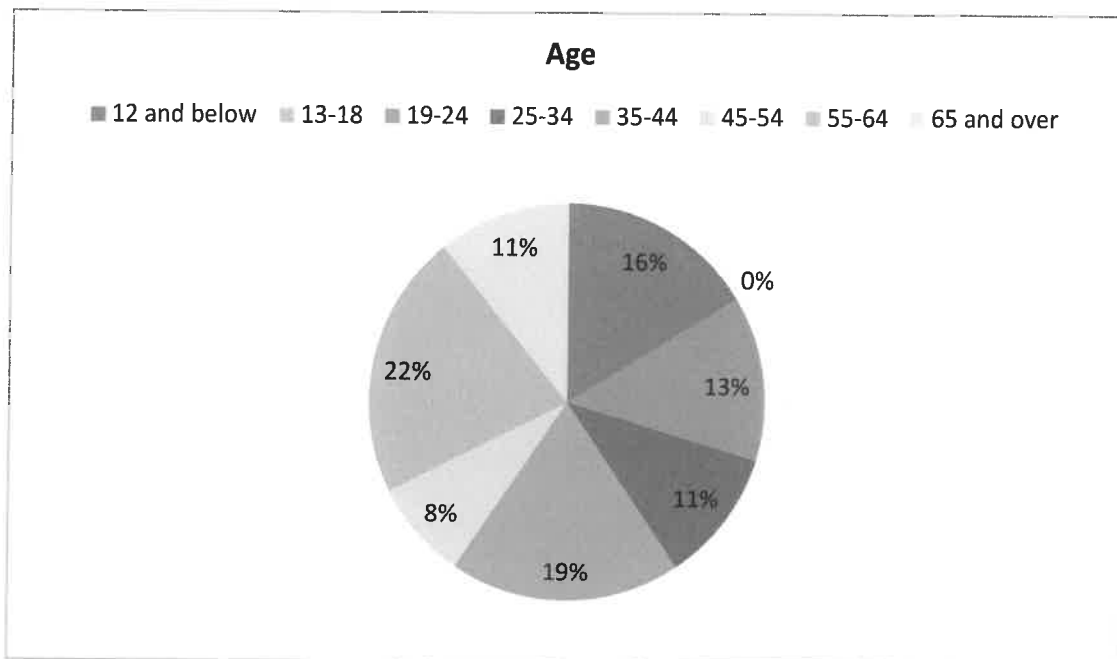
1. The word *disciple* gets tossed around often in Christian circles. What does it truly mean to be a disciple?
2. In your opinion, why is it important to have a mentor to disciple people in Christianity?
3. How can a Christian avoid applying misunderstood principles from Christ's life to their own lives in the wrong way?
4. As the book of Job demonstrates, God does not always guarantee blessings. What is the foundational reason a person loves God if following him doesn't always make us comfortable?
5. Why should a pastor be heavily involved in the life of the church?
6. How should a pastor be involved in the life of the church?
7. Can you mention a few attributes of genuine worship?
8. What are some characteristics of a healthy, gospel-centered community?
9. Why is it so important to have a spiritual mentor, leader, or encourager? What kind of qualities should a disciple look for in such a person?
10. What steps must a disciple take to become a disciple maker? Is there a certain point of spiritual maturity a person must reach before guiding others?

APPENDIX D

GRAPHS

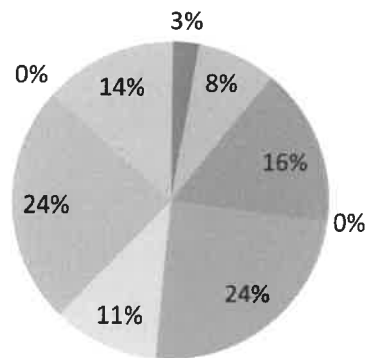
Contextual Analysis



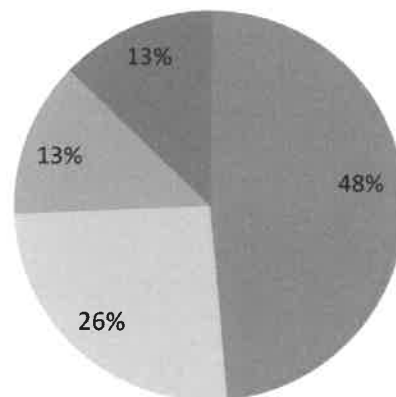


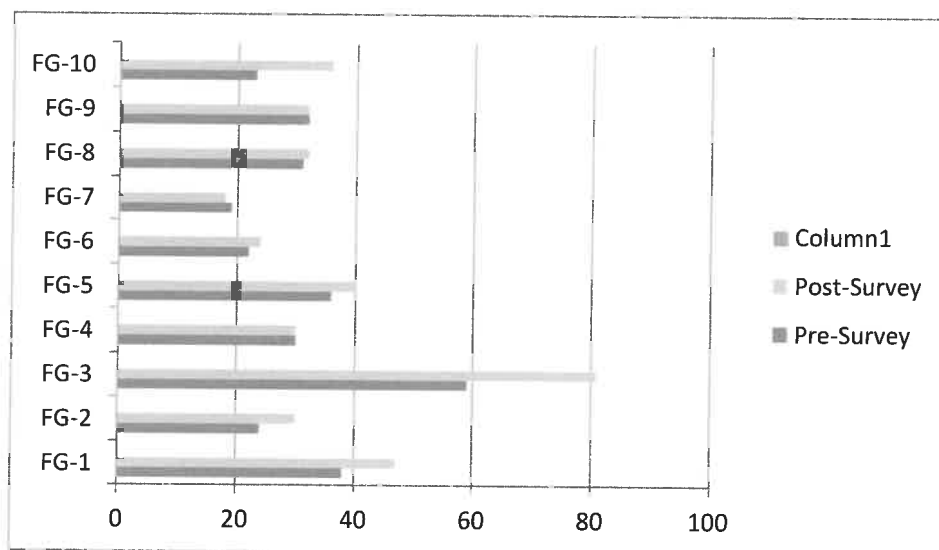
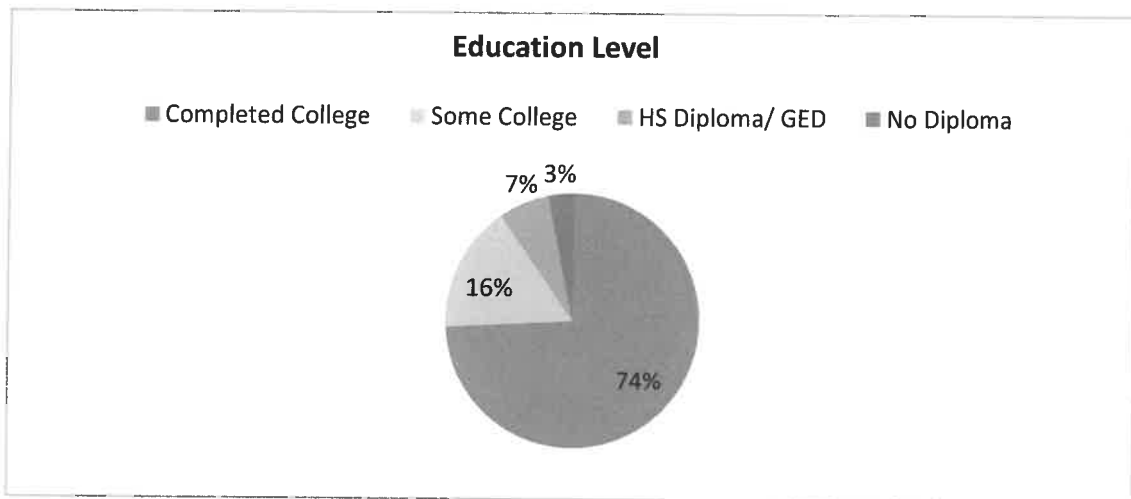
Zip Code

■ North ■ Northwest ■ Northeast ■ Southside ■ Southeast
■ Southwest ■ Eastside ■ Westside ■ Other

**Profession**

■ Education ■ Blue Collar ■ Professional ■ Retired





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